565

August 23. 1670.

IT is Ordered by the Lords of His *Majesties* most Honourable Privy Council, That none shall Re-print, or Import this Book of *Miscellany Sermons*, by Mr. *Hugh Binning*, nor any other of the said Authors Books, for the space of 19. years to come, without licence of the Printers hereof.

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A. G.

HEART-HUMILIATION:

OR

Miscellany Sermons Preached upon some choice Texts, at several Solemn occasions: Never before Printed.

By that eminent Preacher of the Gospel, Mr. *Hugh Binning*, late Minister at *Govan*.

Jer. 4. 14. *O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved, &c.*

EDINBURGH,
Printed by *Thomas Brown*, *Anno DOM.* 1676.

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RED CROSS STREET
LONDON.

Chriſtian Reader,

THis holy Preacher of the Goſpel, had ſo many convictions upon his ſpirit of the neceſſity of the duties of humiliation and mourning, and of peoples ſecuring the eternal intereſt of their ſouls for the life to come, by fleeing in to Jeſus Chriſt for remiſſion of ſins in his blood, that he made theſe the very ſcope of his Sermons in many publick Humiliations, as if it had been the one thing which he conceived the Lord was calling for in his dayes. A clear evidence whereof thou ſhalt find manifeſted in theſe following Sermons upon choice Texts, wherein the Author endeavoureth, not only to lay before thee, the neceſſity of theſe duties of ſoul-humiliation, but alſo ſheweth thee the Goſpel-manner of performing them, the many ſoul-advantages flowing from the ſerious exerciſe of them, and the many ſoul-deſtroying prejudices following upon the neglect of them: But above all, thou ſhalt find him ſo fully ſetting forth the ſinfulneſs of ſin, and the utter emptineſs of ſelf, as may convince the moſt Phariſaically, elated ſpirits, and make them cry out with Ezra, Chap. 9. 6. O my God, I am aſhamed and bluſh to lift up my face to thee my God, for our iniquities are increaſed

over

over our head, and our treſpaſs is grown up unto the Heavens. *Here thou mayſt read ſuch pregnant demonſtrations of the righteouſneſs and equity of the Lords dealing even in his ſevereſt puniſhments inflicted upon the children of men, as may ſilence every whiſperer againſt providence, and make them ſay,* as Lam. 3. 22. It is of the Lords mercies we are not conſumed, even becauſe his compaſſions fail not. *And laſtly, thou ſhalt perceive the inconceivable fitneſs and fulneſs of Chriſt as a Saviour, and his never enough to be admired tenderneſs and condeſcending willingneſs to accept of humble, heart-broken, and heart-panting ſinners after him, with ſuch plainneſs of ſpeech demonſtrat, as may enable the moſt bruiſed reed to quench all the fiery darts of the devil, whereby he laboureth to affright them from making application to Jeſus for ſalvation. Now that the Lord would make thoſe and ſuch like labours of his faithful ſervants uſeful and advantagious to thy ſoul (Chriſtian Reader) is the prayer of*

Thy ſervant in the Goſpel of our deareſt Lord and Saviour,

A. S.

At a publick Fast in *July*, first Sabbath, 1650.

SERMON I.

Deut. 32. 4,5,6,7. *He is the Rock, his Work is perfect: for all his wayes are judgement:* &c.

THere are two things may comprehend all Religion, the knowledge of God and of our selves: these are the principles of Religion, and are so nearly conjoyned together, that the one cannot be *truely* without the other, much lesse *savingly*; It is no wonder that *Moses* crave attention, and to the end he may attain it from an hard hearted deaf People; that he turns to the Heavens and to the Earth, as it were to make them the more inexcuseable. The matter of his Song is both divine and necessary, throughout it all he insists upon these two, to discover what they were to themselves, and what God was to them; he paralels their way with his way, that they finding the infinite distance, might have other thoughts of themselves and of him both. It is a Song it is true, but a sad Song: The people of Gods mourning should be of this nature, mixed, not pure sor-

row. Its hard to determine, whither there be more matter of Conſolation or Lamentation, when ſuch a compariſon is made to the life: when God's goodneſs and our evils are ſet before our eyes, which may moſt work the heart to ſuch affections. Nay, I think it is poſſible they may both contribute to both theſe. Is there any more abaſing and humbling principle then Love? How ſhall the ſinner loath it ſelf in his glorious preſence? will not ſo much kindneſſe and mercy ſo often repeated, as oft as it is mentioned, wound the heart in which there is any tenderneſſe? And again, when a ſoul beholds its own ingratitude and evil requital of the Lords kindneſs, how vile and how perverſe it is, how muſt it loath it ſelf in duſt and aſhes? yet is not all ground of hope removed, ſuch a ſad ſight may make mixed affections: if we be ſo perverſe and evil, then he is infinitely good, and his mercy and goodneſſe is above our evils; if we have dealt ſo with him, yet is he the Rock that changes not, he is a God of Truth and will not fail in his Promiſe. Nay, though it be ſad to be ſo evil, void of all goodneſs, yet may the ſoul bleſſe him for evermore, that hath choſen this way to glorifie his Name, to build up his praiſe upon our ruine; May not a ſoul thus glory in ſad infirmities, becauſe his ſtrength is perfected in them and made manifeſt? May not a ſoul chooſe emptineſſe in it ſelf, that it may be beholden to his Fulneſſe? How refreſhing a view might the ſadeſt look on our miſery and emptineſs be, if we did behold his purpoſe of manifeſting his Glory in it? Ye ſee here a compariſon inſtituted between two very unequal parties,

God

God and Man, there is no likeneſſe, let be equality in it, yet there is almoſt an equality in unlikneſſe. The one is infinitely good and perfect; well, what ſhall we compare to him, *who is like thee O God among the gods?* Angels goodneſſe, their perfection and innocency, hath not ſuch a name and appearance in his ſight; ſo then, there can be no compariſon made this way, let no fleſh glory in his ſight in any thing, but, *let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord*, for in the ſight of the glorious Lord, all things do diſappear and evaniſh. But ſurely nothing, though moſt perfect, can once come within termes of reckoning beſide him for any worth: *Moſes* ſees nothing to ſet beſide God, that will appear in its own greatneſſe and native colours, but the Creatures evil and ſin, and if this be not infinite abſolutely, or equal to his goodneſſe, yet it comes neareſt the borders of infiniteneſſe: ſo then, is God moſt perfect? is he infinite in Goodneſs, in Truth, in Righteouſneſſe, &c? And ſo infinite, that before him nothing appeares good? *none good ſave one, that is God.* Yet we may find another infinite, and it is in evil ſinful man; and theſe two contraries ſet beſide other, do much illuſtrate each other. Its true that his Grace ſuperabounds, and his goodneſſe is more then the creatures ſinfulneſs; yet I ſay you ſhall not find any thing that cometh nearer the infinitneſſe and degrees of his goodneſſe, then the ſinfulneſs of men; How much the more glorious he appeares, ſo much the more vile and baſe doth it appear.

If ye did indeed ponder and weigh theſe two Verſes in the ballance of the Sanctuary, would not your heart ſecretly ask this queſtion within

you, do I thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh and unwiſe? yea, would ye not account your ſelves mad *to forſake the fountain of living waters and dig broken ciſternes to your ſelves;* O! of how great moment were this to humble your ſouls to day? This day ye are called to mourning and afflicting your ſouls. Now I know not a more ſutable exerciſe for a day of humiliation, or a principle that may more humble and abaſe your ſouls, then the ſerious and deep conſideration of theſe two, what God is, and hath been to us, and what we are and have proved to him; what hath made ſo many formal humiliations that have provoked him to anger? certainly we do not either ſeriouſly think on any of theſe, or if on one of them, yet not on both; the moſt part of you know no more in ſuch a day, but a name and ceremony of a little abſtinence. *Is this to ſanctifie a day to the Lord?* when ye do not ſo much as the people, who bowed down their head for a day and ſpread ſackloth under them. I wonder how ye think to pacifie his Wrath, and are not rather afraid of adding fewel and oyl to the flame of his indignation. Ye come here and ſit as in former times, and what do ye more either here or at home? There is no ſoul-affliction, no not for a day; the moſt part of you are no more affected with your ſins and his judgements, then if none of theſe things were. Now I pray you, what ſhall the Lord ſay to us, when he ſpeaks to the Jews in ſuch termes *Iſai.* 58. 5. *Is it ſuch a faſt that I have choſen, a man for a day to afflict his ſoul?* And do ye ſo much as afflict it for a day, or at all? Is this then the Faſt that he will choſe, to abſtain from your breakfaſt in

the

the morning, and at night to compense the want of it and no more? Is this an acceptable day to the Lord? the Lord upbraides the Jews, *will thou call this a fast?* and what reason have we to ask you, is it possible ye think ye do indeed fast to the Lord? I cannot think that the most part of you dare say, that ever ye fasted or afflicted your souls.

Always here is the way, if we consider it, to spend a day acceptably to the Lord, enter in a serious consideration of his Majesty, and your selves; study on these two, till ye find your hearts bear the stamp of them, enlarge your hearts in the thoughts of them; both are infinite, his goodnesse and power and mercy, and your sin and misery, no end of them; what ever ye find good in God, write up answerably to it, so much evil and sin in your selves and the land: and what evil ye find in your selves and the land, write up so much goodnesse and mercy in his account. All the names of his praise would be so many grounds of your confusion in your selves, and would imprint so many notes of reproach and disgrace upon the Creature, found so contrary to Him. This is even the exercise God calls us to this day, to consider his wayes to us, and our wayes to him, how he hath walked, and how we have walked; because ye lose the sight of these two, he sends affliction, because in our prosperity and peace we forget God, and so our selves; as ye find this people did, *when they waxed fat they kicked against him, aud forgat that he was their rock*; we are so much taken up with our own ease and peace, that we do not observe him in his dealings; therefore doth the Lord trouble our Peace,

removes these things we are taken up with, makes a publick proclamation of affliction, and blessed be his Name whose end is gracious, he means this, it is the proclamation of all his Judgments, turn your eyes off your present ease here, consider what I am, and what your selves are. No Nation so soon buries the memory of his Mercies, O how soon are they drowned in oblivion, and we forget our own provocations, as suddenly, therefore must he write our iniquities upon a rod, that we may read them in great Letters, and he writes his former goodness in the change of his Dispensations, when his way to us changes, that we may know what is past. This is the great design that God hath in the World, to declare himself and his own Name, that it may be wondered and admired at by men, and this cannot be but by our ruine, abasing us in the dust; He therefore uses to stain the pride of all glory, that his alone may appear without spot. This is then the great controversie of God with men and nations in all generations, they will not see him alone exalted, and will not bow before him, and see their own vileness. Why doth he overturn Kingdomes and Thrones? why doth he shake Nationes so often? here it is, Gods controversie will never cease, till all men acknowledge him in his highness and holiness, as the sole Fountain of all Life; and find themselves vile, lesse then nothing, nay worse then nothing and emptiness. If ye would then have God at peace with the land and your selves; here is the compendious way, set him up a Throne of eminency in your hearts, and put your selves in the dust, take with your own guiltiness

and

and naughtineſſe, and impoſſibility to help your ſelves, in your ſelves; hold theſe two ſtill in your eyes, that he may be alone exalted.

Look how unequal a match, Ver. 4, 5. *He is the Rock*, a Rock indeed, if we ſpeak of ſtrength, lo, he is ſtrong; if of ſtability, he is *the Lord and changes not, the ancient of dayes.* Hath not thou heard and conſidered this, that *the Almighty faints not, and wearies not.* He holds forth himſelf in ſuch a name to his people, a ready, all-ſufficient, perpetual and enduring refuge to all that truſt in him, and flie unto him as a Rock higher then they; and this is the foundation that the Church is builded on, *againſt which the gates of hell ſhall not prevail.* Gods Omnipotency for defence, his eternity, faithfulneſſe and unchangeableneſſe to make that ſure, his mercy and goodneſſe makes a hole in that Rock to enter in, a ready acceſſe for poor ſhipwrakt and broken men, who have no other refuge. This is our Rock on which the Church is builded, *Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Cor. 10 4. *Matth.* 16. 18. God were inacceſſible in himſelf, an impregnable Rock; how would ſinners overcome him, and enter into him, to be ſaved from Wrath? Nay, but Jeſus Chriſt hath made a plain way and path, out of the waves of ſin and miſery, into this Rock higher then we; and ſo the poor ſoul that is loſt in its own eyes, and ſees no refuge, is forced to quite the broken ſhip of created confidence, for fear of periſhing; how doth it find a door in this Rock to enter? and there is water to drink of, *a fountain of living waters* comes out of it, and that *is Chriſt.*

Now all theſe Names of his praiſe tub ſo many marks of ſhame on his people; O how ſad is

the ſecret reproof and expoſtulation contained in this commendation of God, he hath been a Rock to us, our refuge that we fled unto, and found ſure; for as in our ſtraits, we mounted upon his power and were ſupported, when *the floods lifted up their waves*, yet have we left our Rock, gone out from our ſtrength; He offers himſelf a Rock unto us, his fulneſs and all-ſufficiency for us, and yet *we leave the fountain of living waters and digs broken Ciſterns*, had rather chooſe our own broken ſhip to toſs up and down into. He abides for ever the ſame; though we change, he changes not. How may it reprove our backſlidings, that we depart from our Rock, and where ſhall we find a refuge in the day of indignation? Is there any created mountain but ſome floods of the time will cover; therefore it is folly and madneſs to forſake this Rock that is ſtill above the floods, *he is mightier then the noiſe of many waters.* It may reprove our unbelief, we change our Faith according to his Diſpenſation, our Faith ebbs and flows as the Tide of his Providence, and thus we are as ſticks fleeting in the water, toſſed up and down; but would ye be eſtabliſhed as Mount Sion? would ye be unmoveable in the midſt of great waters, that they ſhall not come near unto you? then by all means get upon this Rock, that abides unmoved in the midſt of the waves, though they ſhould beat on it, and the wind blow, yet it is proof of all tempeſt; all things might be driven up and down about you with the Lords diſpenſation, but ye ſhould abide the ſame, and might look round about you on the troubled ſea of mens minds, of lands and eſtates. If you come here,

ye

ye may make ſhip-wrack, but ye ſhall not drown, though ye loſs the creatures comfort and defence, yet ye are on your Rock, which is eſtabliſhed before the rocks and mountains: you may be ſure of ſalvation, he that made the rocks and winds and ſeas, is your Rock.

His VVork is perfect] As he doth not trouble himſelf when all is troubled about him; *ſo he keeps him alſo in perfect peace whoſe mind is ſtayed on him*, ſo alſo what he doth among men, though it cannot paſs without mans cenſure, yet it is in it ſelf perfect, compleat, without ſpot or defect. What is the ſubject of all mens queſtions, doubts, complaints, cenſures, expoſtulations and ſuch like, of which the World is full? Its ſome one Work of God or other; there is no Work of his Providence, but ſome man finds a fault in it, and would be at the mending of it. *neq; Deus cum pluit, omnibus placet*, if he give rain he diſpleaſes many, if he withhold it again, we are as little pleaſed. The reaſon of all this miſconſtruction is, we look on his Work by parcels, and takes it not whole and intire, ſo it is perfect and cannot be made better. *His VVorks are perfect* in relation to the beginning and original of them, his own everlaſting purpoſe; men often bring forth works by gueſſe, by their purpoſe, ſo no wonder it anſwer not their deſire; but *known to him are all his works from the beginning*, and ſo he doth nothing in time, but what was his everlaſting pleaſure; often we purpoſe well, and reſolve perfectly, but our practice is a criple, execution of it is maimed and imperfect; but all his Works are carved out, and done juſt as he deſigned them, without the leaſt alteration; and

if it had not been well, would he have thought on it so, and resolved it before hand? *His Works are perfect* in relation to the end to which he appointed them. It may be it is not perfect in it self, a blind eye is not so perfect as a seing eye, nay, but in relation to the glory of his Name, who hath a purpose to declare his power by restoring that sight, it is as perfect. And in this sense, all the imperfection of the Creatures and Creation, all of them are perfect Works, for they accomplish the end wherefore they were sent; and so the night declares his Name and utters a speech as well as the day, the winter as the summer, the wilderness as the fruitful field, for what is the perfection of the Creature, but in as far as it accomplishes his purpose and end, as the maker of it serves himself with it, and therefore all his Work is perfect, for it is all framed in Wisdome, to his own ends, in number, measure and weight; it is so exactly agreeing to that, that you could not imagine it better. Again, *his Work is perfect*, if we take it all together, and do not cut it in parcels, and look on it so. Is there any workmanship beautiful, if ye look upon it in the doing, while the Timber lies in one part, and the Stones in another? is that a perfect building when ye see one arm here, another there, & a leg scattered beside them? hath that image any comlines? certainly no; but look upon these united, and then they are perfect; Letters and syllables make no sense, till ye conjoyn them in words, and words in sentences. Even so is it here, if ye look on the day alone; the light of it being perpetual would weary us, the night

alone

alone would be more ſo; but the interchange of them is pleaſant, day and night together make a diſtinct language of Gods praiſe; So God hath ſet proſperity and adverſity the one over againſt the other, one of them it may be, ſeems imperfect, nay, but it is a perfect Work that is made up of both; Spots in the face commend the beauty of the reſt of it.

If ye would then look upon Gods Work aright, look one it in the Sanctuaries Light, and ye ſhall ſay, *He hath done all well.* Joyn the end with the beginning, and behold, they agree very well; Many things among us ſeem out of order, many things uncompleat; The reformation of England, how great obſtruction was in the way of it? Is that now a perfect work? Yes certainly; for if we knew his end and purpoſe, it is very well, and could not be bettered by the Art of all men; *His thoughts are far above our thonghts.* The proſperous and uninterrupted ſucceſſe of that party in England, is it a perfect work? yes certainly, for if ye could behold their end ye would ſay ſo, *they are ſet in ſlippery places, their foot ſhall ſlide in due time.*

Entertain this thought in your heart, that he hath done all well, let not your ſecret thoughts ſo much as call them in queſtion, if once ye queſtion, ye will quickly cenſure them; hold this perſwaſion, that nothing can be better then what he doth, nothing can be added and nothing diminiſhed from them, he doth all in number, weight and meaſure, its ſo exactly correſpondent to his purpoſe and deſigne, as if

it

it were weighed out and measured out for that end.

Let this secretly reprove your hearts, the perfection of his Works stains our works, O how imperfect are they? And which is worse, how impudent and bold are we to censure his, and absolve our own? If he have a hand in our work, yet these imperfect works, are perfect in regard of him, as we have a hand in his perfect Works, yet his perfect Works are imperfect in regard of us.

SERMON II.

Deut. 32.4.5. *He is the rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are Judgement: a God of truth, and without iniquity, Just and right is he.* 5. *They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his Children,* &c.

THere are none can behold their own vileness, as it is, but in the sight of Gods glorious holiness: Sin is darkness, and neither sees it self, nor any thing else, therefore must his light shine to discover this darkness. If we abide within our selves, and men like our selves, we cannot wisely judge our selves; our dim sparkle will not make all the imperfections and spots appear; but if men would come forth in the presence of his Majesty, who *turns darkness into light*, and before whom hell is naked, O how base and vile would

could they appear in their own eyes? Is it any wonder that the multitude of you see not your selves, when holy *Esay* and *Job*, had this lesson to learn? *Esay* gets a discovery of his own uncleanness in the sight of Gods glorious holiness, *Isa. 6. 5.* which I think made all his former light darkness; He cryes out *unclean* as if he had never known it before; And so *Job, since I saw thee I abhored my self in dust and ashes*; Ye hear much of him, and it doeth not abase you, but if ye saw him, ye would not abide your selves; you would prefer the dust you trade on to your selves. Ye who know most, there *is* a mystery of iniquity in your hearts, that is not yet discerned, ye are but yet in the coast of that bottomlesse Sea of abomination and vileness. Among all the aggravations of sin, nothing doth so demonstrate the folly, yea, the madness of it, as the perfection, goodness, and absolute unspottedness of God. Its this that takes away all pretence of excuse and leaves the samine nothing, no place to hide its confusion and nakedness and shame into. And therefore is it that *Moses*, when he would convince this people of their ways and make them inexcusable, he draws the paralel of Gods ways and their ways, declares what God is, how absolutly perfect in himself and in his works, had given no cause of provocation to them to depart from him; And then how odious must their departing be? When both are painted on a brod before their eyes; it makes sin become exceeding sinful, When the Lord would pierce the hearts of his people, and ingrave a challenge with the point of an Diamond he uses this as his pen, *Have I been a wilderness to Israel, a Land of darkness, why*

sayes

ſay my people, we are Lords we will come no more t
thee, Jer. 2. 31. *What iniquity have your Fathe*
found in me, that they are gone from me and walke
after vanity. Jer. 2. 5.

There are two things in ſin that exceedingl
abuſe the creature, the iniquity of it, and folly
and madneſs of it: Its contrare to all equity an
reaſon to depart from him that hath made us
and given us a Law, to whom we are by ſo ma
ny obligations tyed. But what is the folly
and madneſs of it? to *depart from the fountain o*
living waters, and dig broken Ciſterns that can hol
none. Ver. 13. This is a thing that the heaven
may be aſtoniſhed at, and if the earth had ſenſe
to underſtand ſuch a thing, the whole fabrick of
it would tremble for horrour at ſuch a madneſſe
and folly of reaſonable ſouls: And this evil hath
two evils in it, we forſake life, and love death,
go from him, and chooſe vanity. It's great ini-
quity to depart without an offence on his part;
He may appeal all our conſciences and let them
ſit down and examine his way moſt narrowly,
what iniquity have ye found in me? what cauſe
have ye to leave me? But when withall he is
a living fountain, he is our glory, he is a fruitful
land, a land of light, our ornament and attire, in
a word, our life and our conſolation, our happi-
neſs and our beauty; what word ſhall be found,
to expreſs the extream madneſs of men to depart
from ſuch an one? & change their glory into that
which doth not profit? If either he were not a foun-
tain of living waters, or if there were any foun-
tain beſide, that could yield water to ſatisfie the
unſatiable deſires of men it were more excuſable,
but what ſhadow ſhall be found, to cover ſuch
an

an iniquity, that is both infinite ſin and incomparable loſs? Its the Scriptures ſtile given to natural men, *fools and ſimple*, all ſin hath folly in it, but the people of Gods departing from him hath extremity of folly in it, beſide iniquity, becauſe they do embrace a dung-hill in inſtead of a Throne, they make the madeſt exchange that can be imagined, glory for ſhame, life for death, at leaſt conſolation and peace, for vanity and vexation and anguiſh of ſpirit.

If ye would be duely affected with the ſight of your own evils, look upon them in this conſideration, and in the view of God your large portion, ye will be forced to confeſs your ſelves *beaſts in his ſight*, *Pſal.* 73. 22. Oh that men would conſider how good and bleſſed the Lord is, how he is alone, and nothing beſide him in heaven and earth, all broken ciſterns, all dung and unprofitable, all vanity and vexation, he only ſelf-ſufficient, all others inſufficient, and therefore a proportioned good for our neceſſity & deſires, and I am ſure ye would be conſtrained to cry out with *David*, *Whom have I in heaven with thee, or in earth beſide thee? It is good for me to draw near to God.* Ye would look on drawing near, and walking with him, and before him, not only as the moſt reaſonable thing, but the beſt thing, moſt beautiful for you, moſt profitable for you, and all other wayes would be looked on as the wayes of death.

His work is perfect] The Lord looked and behold all was good that was made; ſo it was at firſt, the fabrick of this world was an exquiſite and perfect work, a ſuitable demonſtration of his infinite wiſdom, wonderful in all the parts of

of it, and in the unity and harmony of the whole it to
But so also his work of providence is perfect in its parts,
Divine wisdom hath framed and contrived all: sees
and it cannot be better. If any thing seem imperfect in it self, yet it is perfect, in relation to his glorious ends he directs it unto; and so if we would we look on all the works among us; if any thing seemed a spot and disgrace of the creation, certainly the sin of men and Angels; Nay, but even that is so ordered by his holy sovereaignty, that in relation to his Majesty, it may be called a perfect work. If ye do but consider what a glorious high Throne he hath erected to himself for justice and judgement to be the habitation of it, and mercy and truth to go before it, upon the ruins of defaced man, what a Theater of Justice he hath erected upon the Angels falls, ye would call it as perfect a work as is in the world. His work is one in the world, subordinate to one great design of manifesting his own glorious justice and mercy, omnipotency and wisdom. Now what do ye see of it, but parcels, though ye comprehend all your time in one thought, yet certainly ye cannot judge it aright, for it is but one work that all the several buildings and castings down, all the several dispensations of his providence from the beginning to the end make up; and when we think upon these disjoyned, limit our consideration within the bounds of our own time; can we rightly apprehend it? Nay, which is worse, we use to have no more within the compasse of our thought, but some present thing, and how much more do we err then? What beauty, what perfection, can such a small part have? But its present

holgit to him, who beholds with a glance all these
rfections, though succeeding in many generations,
l alt sees it altogether. joyns the end with the be-
inning, sees the first mould, the first foundati-
n to-stone, and the last compleating, all flowing
d soom himself, and returning thither, and ending
; if himself: He hath made an interchange in na-
ea-re, which might teach us; the night alone
ay, ath no beauty, nay, but it beautifies the day;
ye- our darkest hours and tempests, publick and
ay ersonal, are they perfect works? Yes certain-
er y, if ye compound them with your Sun-shines,
to nd calms; several colours make Pictures beau-
i- ful: the one is as needful as the other. And
t, ye did consider your profit more then your
r onour and pleasure, ye would say so. He doth
, ot model his works according to our fancy to
e lease us, but our good to profit us, and he is
. wiser then we, and so then it is the most perfect
work in it self, that possibly displeaseth us most.
Therefore ye would judge of his dealing by ano-
her rule, nor your satisfaction; for please you
nd perish you. If he spared the rod, he should
ate us indeed; fond love is real hatred. Chri-
tians, if ye would judge his works by his word,
nd not by your sense, by your well, and not
y your will, certainly ye would say as the men
id of Christ, *he hath done all well*, the world
would discover to you a perfection, even in im-
erfection, a perfection in infirmities, that ye
hould not only rejoyce in them, but glory in
hem: *most gladly therefore will I glory*, &c. saith
Paul. Are infirmities a perfect work? Or is the
affering of *Paul* to be buffetted and tempted a
erfect work? What comfort is in it? Yes much,

infir-

infirmities alone are infirmities indeed; nay, infirmities *in me*, and ſtrength *in Jeſus*, we neſſe in me, and ſtrength dwelling in me, t make up one perfect work; that could as l want the infirmities as the ſtrength; the g of God and our well and conſolation requ the one, as well as the other; it could not compleat without any of them. What do think of the times now, are *Englands* apoſt and *Irelands* deſolation perfect works? T great work of Reformation, that ſeemed to above our ſhoulders, it's now razed to ground and the very foundations removed. deformation a perfect work? Certainly, if look on theſe things in the Scriptures light, a conſider them in relation to him who is chief builder, and doth in [illegible]ven and ea what he pleaſeth, that deformation is a perfe work, though not a perfect reformation, thou we could not inform you of the perfection of yet the general might ſilence us, all this ſhall no miſſe, no marr in the end. His work at th end of accompts ſhall appear ſo compleat, as it had never had interruption. He is wiſe, an knows what he doth, if this were not for his glo ry and his peoples good, certainly it ſhould no be. Was not the peoples wandering in th wilderneſſe 40. years a moſt ſtrange work? longer interruption of the expected and begu voyage out of *Egypt*? What humane reaſon would have ſtyled this work with perfection Did they not often murmure againſt it? yet *Moſes* calls this a perfect work alſo. What if th Lord be diging the ground deeper in *England* that the foundation may be the ſurer? What i

be on a work of judgement, filling the cup of ny deluded blaſphemers, that he may have other cup of wrath prepared? What if this be great purpoſe, to execute vengeance upon a ophane generation, that will not abide the ry name and form of godlineſſe, by theſe who tend to the name of it as their honour? What the Lord hath defaced all that this Kingdom as inſtrumental in building of in *England*, that alone may have the glory in a ſecond Temple ore glorious? Many things there may be in is mind, and *he is in one mind, and who can turn m?* and what his ſoul deſireth, even that he oth; and this may be enough to ſatisfie us: *e ſees and knows all his works from the beginning*, nd without all controverſie he hath provided it o, that the reproach of his Name ſhall be made p with the more ſhining of his glory, and the flictions of his people ſhall be compenſed with ongs of deliverance. May ye not give him ſo uch credit as ye would give to a skilful man in his own Trade? Ye know it is his Name, *Excellent in counſel, and wonderful in working*; then take his work, expound it according to his Word, and not your apprehenſion. It may be his vvork appears not excellent, nay, but if ye knevv his counſel, ye vvould think it ſo. His vvonderful counſel makes all his vvorks excellent, and therefore do not take upon you to judge his vvorks, unleſſe ye could vvade the depth of his counſels, elſe ye declare your ſelves to be both ignorant and preſumptuous. *There is a time to build, and a time to caſt down, a time for every thing*, ſaith the vviſe man; novv I ſay, he knovvs the time and ſeaſon, he does every thing in his time. If ye

come

come by a Work man that is casting dovv
house that in your appearance seems go
vvould ye condemn him presently? No, but s
till ye see vvhat he vvill do next, vvait till
due time, and vvhen ye see a better piece
workmanship, on that ground ye shall abso
him. Though God often change his work,
not think he changes his Counsel and Purpo
as men do. No, *he is in one mind and who c
turn him*, therefore he had that change in
mind when he made the work, when he erec
such a throne, h had this in his mind to cas
down within such a space, and so his change,
throwing down, is as perfect in his mind as
building up. Ye have large and big apprehe
sions of temporal Kingdoms a Crowns of G
vernment and such like a they were gre
yea only things: but they are not so to him: a
this world and its standing, all the Kingdo
and their affairs are not his great wo k and b
sinesse; he hath an great work, *the bringing
many sons to Glory*, and compleating of Jes
Christ, building of that glorious mystical buil
ding, the holy Temple made up of living stones
of which Christ is the foundation and chief cor
ner stone both; and its this that he attends t
most; other works among men though the
have more noise, they are lesse concerned; a
these are but in the by, and subservient to hi
great designe, and like the Scaffolds of a buil
ding, that are, it may be, sometime very needful,
Nay, but when the building is compleated, he
shall remove all these, he hath no more use of
them; *Kings shall be thy nurse-fathers, Kings shall
bow to thee.* He is not much concerned in go-
vernment

rnment nor in Governours; but for his little cks sake; and if these were gathered, all these all have an end, and the flock alone abide for er.

And all his ways are Judgement.] This is to the me purpose, his ways and his works are one, d this is the perfection of his work, that it is right and equal, whether they be in Justice or ercy, they are all righteous and holy, no iniity in them, his ways are straight and equal, act as if they were measured by an exact even le; but because we make application of a ooked rule to them, we do imagine that they e crooked; as the blind man judges no light be, because he sees it not. How may the ord contend and plead with us as with that eople. *Ezek.* 18. 25. Is it possible that any can hallenge him and clear themselves, *Who will Justified of all when he is judged*, and *before whom flesh can be Justified?* and yet behold the iniuity of mens hearts. there is a secret reflection of ur spirits upon his majesty, as if his ways were ot equal; when ever we repine against them; nd when we do not take with our iniquity, and op our mouth with dust. Behold, the Lord will assert his own wayes, and plead with all esh this controversie, that all his proceedings re full of equity, he walks according to a rule, hough he be not tyed to a rule. he walks according to the rules of Wisdom, Justice and Mercy, hough his illimited soveraignty might be a sufcient ground of clearing of all his proceedings. ut we walk not according to a rule, though we e bound to a rule and a rule full of equity.

Here

Here is the equity and juſtneſſe of his w
the Goſpel holds it forth in a twofold conſideng
tion, Firſt, *If any man turn from his iniqu*
and flie unto my Son as the City of refuge,
ſhall live, he hath eternal life, iniquity ſhall
be his ruine, although he hath done iniquity;
Who is a God like unto thee that pardoneth iniquity,
not this compleat mercy? whatever iniq
hath been, aggravat it as ye can, though it co
have ruined a world, yet it could not have
ned thee, that turns in to Jeſus Chriſt from
quity. What exception can all the world
againſt this, or his walking according to it.
on the other hand whoſoever continueth in
though he appear to himſelf and others never
righteous, if he entertain and love any known
and will not part with it for Jeſus Chriſt, *ſhall*
be dye in his iniquity? Is there any iniquity in
that he receive the wages of his works his
ward? that he eat of the fruit of his own wa
and drink of his own devices? But how mai
hearts cenſure this way as a rigid and ſtrick
vere dealing: the multitude think it cruelty
condemne any Chriſtened ſoul, to put ſo
ny in hell; the civil man will think it's too hi
meaſure that he ſhould be ranked in hell
the prophane. But certainly, *all mouths ſhall*
ſtopped one day, and he ſhall be juſtified when he ju
es; Ye that will not juſtifie him in his ſayings
ſet to your ſeal to the truth of the word,
ſhall be conſtrained to juſtify him, when he
cuts that ſentence, ye ſhall precipitat your
ſentence and rather wonder at his clemency
ſuffering you ſo long.

This way of the Lord is equal and right
ſelf, but it is not ſo to every one, *the juſt man ſh*

s w*k in it and not stumble*, as in an even way, no-
sideng shall offend him. *Hosea* 14. last V. Yet for
iqu equal and straight as it is, many other trans-
ge, essors shall fall therein; they stumble even in
all noon day, and high way where no offence is,
ity; s true often his own people stumble in it as *Da-*
quit, Psal. 73. and 94. *Davids foot was slipping*, yet
iqu secret hold was by mercy. It often requires a
t co se and prudent man to understand it, because
ve *footsteps are in the deep waters*. Psa. 77. 19.
m *way is in the depths of the sea, his paths in great*
d *aters*, so that men must wait till the Lord ex-
. pound his own wayes, till he come out of the
in aters and make them a dry plain, and this is
ver ar advantage, the word sayes *he is near thee in*
vn *y mouth, and neither above nor beneath in the depths*
all at thou needs neither descend nor ascend to know it,
n the eut. 30. 11, 12, 13, 14. But his way is in the
is epths, and his footsteps are not known, so that
ay e ought to hold us by the word till he expound
ma is vvork, his vvord vvill teach us our duty and
ck ve may commit unto him his ovvn vvay, the
ty vord is a commentary to expound his vvays.
n *David* lost the sight of Gods footsteps and vvas
hike to wander, till he came to the Sanctuary,
w and this shined as a Candle in a dark place, he
all earned there to know the unknown footsteps
u and to follow them. By all means embrace the
a Word and be satisfied with it, when ye do not
y comprehend his Work, it teaches as much in
e general, as may put us to quietnesse, all his
o wayes are Judgement, Just and True in all his
y Wayes is the King of Saints. If I do not com-
prehend how it is, no wonder, for he makes
darknesse his covering, he spreads over his most
curious Engines and Pieces of Workmanship,

a vail of darkneſſe for a ſeaſon, and *who can behold him when he hides himſelf* ſayes *Job*, though he withdraw the Covering, yet w am I; *Who can by ſearching find out God?* ſhall examine his way, what rule ſhall I t to try it by? If I meaſure by my ſhallow ca city, or by my crooked way, ſhall I have juſt account of it? Will my Arm meaſure Heavens as his doth? If I examine it, or it by himſelf, *He is high as Heaven and ſearchable.* Therefore it becomes us to hea en to his Word, and believe its ſentenc his Work, when reaſon cannot compreh it.

One thing (if it were deeply engraven on hearts) would be a principle of ſetling our rits, in all the myſteries and riddles of pro dence, the knowledge and faith of his So raigny, of his Highneſſe and of his Wiſdom ſhould he give account of his Matters to us? is wiſe and knowes his Works, but is he bou to make us know them? *His wayes are ab our thoughts and wayes, as Heaven above the Earth* 55. And therefore O Graſhopper in the Ear that dwells in Tabernacles of Clay, do not p ſume to model his ways according to thy co ceptions. One thing is certain, this is enou for Faith, *all his wayes are mercy and truth to th that keep his Covenant and his Teſtimonies*, P 25. 10. And there is no Way or Path of God far above our reach, and unſearchable as Mercy in pardoning ſin, and this is only the tiſfying anſwer to all your objections and ſc ples, in theſe ye do but vent your own thoug but ſayes the Lord, my thoughts are above y

thoug

oughts, as Heaven above Earth. Ye but
eak of your own wayes, but my wayes are
above yours, they are not measured by your
iquity; and therefore, *David* subjoyns,
al. 25. Verse 11. *pardon my iniquity for it is*
great.

SERMON III.

euter. 32. 4, 5. *He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are Judgement: a God of truth, and without iniquity, Just and Right is he.* 5. *They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his Children, they are a perverse and crooked generation.*

ALL his wayes are Judgement, both the wayes of his Commandments and the ways his Providence, both his Word which he th given as a Lanthorn to mens paths, and s Works among men. And this were the ssednesse of men, to be found both walk- in his wayes, and waiting on him in his yes, having respect to all his Command- nts, and respect to himself in all his Works: e all know in general that he doth all well, d that all his Cōmandments are Holy and Just; y, but our practice and affections belie our

knowledge, and for the most part, we stane
crosse in our humours and affections, and coth
versation both to his Word and Providenm
and this is our misery; *Great peace have they tho*
love thy Law. VVhat peace then can keep thdg
heart and mind, that is dayly at variance wi ay
his Statuts and Judgements? when the heg
would wish such a Command were not, whov
it is an eye sore to look upon it. *Blessed are* rst
meek, it is good for a man, both quietly to wait ae r
hope and keep silence. How then must that sis
rit be miserable, that stands crosse unto Go A
Dispensations, and would limit the Holy Ony
Do not often our hearts say, *I do well to be* itl
gry, why is it thus with me? But, *who* bur
hardened himself against him and prospered? wr
counsel must stand; and you may vex your sort
and disquiet your soul in the mean time by ir ea
patience, but you cannot by your thought a S
one cubit to your stature, you may make yof th
case worse nor Providence hath made it, bay
you cannot make it better by so doing; so than
at length, you must bow to him or be broke Boo
Oh then that this were engraven on our hearef
with the point of a Diamond! *All his* wa tu
are Judgement, that ye might be overcome wi eq
the equity of his Command and Dispensatio ar
and your heart and tongue might not move nto
gainst them. It was enough of old with ver
Saints, *It is the Lord, let him do what seems* gl igh
in his eyes, Gods Soveraignty alone ponder nd
may stop our mouth, but if ye withal consi out
it is perfect Equity that rules all, it is Div ot
Wisdome that is the square of his Works, thief.
how ought we to stoop chearfully unto the no

e ſtame thing ye would remember, his wayes and
l coths are Judgement, and if ye judge aright of
denm, ye muſt judge his Way and not his ſingle
y thotſteps; ye will not diſcern Equity and
p thdgement in one ſtep or two, but conſider his
Way, joyn adverſity with proſperity, humble-
heg with exalting, take along the Threed of his
whovidence, and one part ſhall help you to un-
re rſtand another. There is reaſon in all, but
it ae reaſon is not viſible to us in ſo ſmall parts of
t ſis Way and Work:

Go *A God of Truth*] Strange it is that his Maje-
Only is pleaſed to cloath himſelf with ſo many
be titles and Names for us. He conſiders what
bur neceſſity is, and accordingly expreſſes his
? wn Name. I think nothing doth more hold
r forth the unbelief of men and Atheiſm of our
y iearts, nor the many ſeveral Titles God takes
t a Scripture; There is a neceſſity of a multitude
yof them to make us take up God, becauſe we
, baying upon a general notion of God, rather
o thame in our imaginations an Idol then the true
ke God. As there is nothing doth more lively re-
pea reſent the unbelief of our hearts, then the mul-
wa tude of Promiſes: Men that conſider ſuch
wequent repetitions of one thing in Scripture, ſo
ti many diverſe expreſſions of one God, may retire
ve nto their own hearts, and find the cauſe of it,
n even the neceſſity of it; But while we look ſo
g lightly on theſe, we muſt judge it ſuperfluous
er nd vain. Needed there any more to be ſaid,
ſi out *I am your God, I am God*, if our ſpirits were
iv not ſo far degenerated unto Atheiſm and unbe-
thief. Certainly that word *Jehovah* holds forth
he more to Angels then all the inculcated Names

 and

and Titles of God to us; becauſe we are
and ſlow of heart. Therefore wonder at
two when ye read the Scriptures; Gods
deſcendency to us, and our Atheiſm and
belief of him; they are both myſteries and
ceeding broad: There is not a Name of
but it gives us a Name, and that of repro
and diſhonour; ſo that for every one, ſai
evil may be written down; and it is to
purpoſe, *Moſes* draws them out in leng
that in the Glaſſe of his glorious Name,
people might behold their own ugly face.
Name is clear, *He is a God of Truth*, not
a true God, but Truth it ſelf; to note his
cellency and Eminency in it. It is Chr
Name, *I am the Truth*, the ſubſtantial Truth,
whom all the Promiſes are Truth, are Yea and
men. His Truth is his Faithfulneſſe in perfo
ing his Promiſes, and doing what his Mou
hath ſpoken: And this *is eſtabliſhed in the*
Heavens, Pſal. 89. 2. His everlaſting purp
is in Heaven where he dwells; And if a
man can aſcend up to Heaven, if any creat
can break through the Clouds, then may
Truth be ſhaken. His Word comes down
mong men; Nay, but the foundation of
in Heaven, and there is his Purpoſe eſtabli
ed; and therefore, there is nothing done
time can impare or hinder it. Ye think
World very ſure, the Earth hangs unmovea
though it hang upon nothing; All the tumul
confuſions and reels hath been in the Wor
have never moved it to the one ſide. Heav
goeth about in one Tenure perpetually, kee
ing ſtill the ſame diſtance. Nay, but his Tru

e are more eſtabliſhed then ſo. Heaven and Earth at depends but upon a word of Command, he ods Oath ſaid, *let it be ſo*, and *ſo it is*. Nay, but and is Word is more eſtabliſhed. of it ſaith Chriſt and *one jot or title of it cannot fail, though Heaven and* of *Oath ſhould fail*. He may change his Commands epro he pleaſes, but he may not change his Promiſe, e, ſois puts an obligation on him, as he is Faith- to al and true to perform it; and when an Oath leng ſuperadded, O! how immutable are theſe e, wo? When he promiſes in his Truth and e. Tswears in his Holineſſe. Is there any power in ot oHeaven and Earth can break that double cord? is *Matth.* 5. 18. *Heb.* 6. 18. There is no name of Chr God but it is comfortable to ſome, and as ter- uth, ible to others. What comfort is it to a godly and man that truſts in his Word, *He is a God of* r for *truth*? An honeſt mans word is much, his oath Mou s more. What ſhall his Word be who is a he w God of Truth? Who, though all men ſhould urp be liars, yet God is true. Ye who have ven- f atured your Souls on his Word, ye have an un- eat peakable advantage, *his truth endures for ever,* ay *and it is eſtabliſhed in the Heavens*, the ground of n it is without beginning, the end of it without f iend. Ye are more ſure then the frame of Hea- bli ven and Earth, *for all theſe ſhall wax old as a gar-* ne *ment*. We ſpeak of a naked word of truth; t indeed it is no naked Word that is Gods Word; ab His Works of Providenee, and his Diſpenſati- ul on to yow, is a naked and bare foundation, or nay, a ſandy foundation, and ye who lean ſo av much to them, is it any wonder, ye ſo often ſhak re and waver? All other grounds beſide the Word, ru are uncertain, unſtable, this only endures for

ever; The creatures goodneſſe and perfe
is but as the Graſſe and the Flour of the Fi
Venture not much on your diſpoſitions
frames, thou knows not what a day may b
forth, but his Truth is to all generations,
it is well tryed, as Gold ſeven times; all g
rations have tryed it and found it better
pure Gold. His Diſpenſations are arbitr
no rule to you; he loveth to declare his So
raigney here, and to expatiat in the creat
ſight, beyond its conceiving; but he hath li
ed himſelf in his Word, and come down to
and laid bonds on himſelf. Will he then u
them for us? Give him liberty where he lo
it; take him bound where he binds him
How may God expoſtulate with this gener
on, as theſe of little faith? *How long ſhall*
I bide you ſaith Chriſt? How long will C
ſtians tempt the Lord in ſeeking ſigns? A
will not reſt upon his only Word and Promi
O Adulterous generation, how long ſhall I
with you and ye will not believe? Is it
righteouſneſſe in him, either to give you
ſigne at all, or to give you a ſigne darker th
the thing it ſelf, as he did to the Phariſees.
will give credit to a mans word, and will
not believe Gods? An honeſt man will
more truſt of us, then the True and Living G
Shall he not be offended with this? We d
clare it unto you that he is Truth it ſelf, a
will not fail in his promiſe; let that be yo
Caſtle and Refuge to enter into. Mercy a
Truth are two ſweet companions to go alo
with you in your pilgrimage, *David* prayed f
them, *Pſal.* 61.7. *O prepare thy mercy and truth*

preſer

serve me; Who will not ly safe within these erlasting Arms? what power can break ough? And this he promised to himself, *al.* 57. 3. *God shall send them out*, &c. Mercy ade so many precious Promises, and Truth eps them. Mercy is the Fountain and Sourse all our Consolation, and Truth and Faithnesse conveighs it to us, and keeps it for us; is these two that go before his Face, when he s on a Throne of Majesty and makes himself cessible to sinners, *Psal.* 89. 14. and so they are e path way he walks in towards those who k him, *Psal.* 25. 10.

But this sweet and Precious Name, that is as yntment poured forth to these who love him; ow doth it smell of death to those who walk ontrair to him? *He is a God of Truth*, to execute his Threatnings on those who dispise his Commands, and though ye flatter your selves n your own eyes, and cry *peace peace, even though e walk in the imagination of your heart*; yet certainly *he is a God of Truth*. I pray you read that ad and weighty word, that will be like a Millstone about many mens necks, to sink them in Hell, *Deut.* 29. 20, 21; *Ye who add drunkenness to thrist*; whose rule of walking is your own lust, and whatsoever pleaseth you without respect of his Commands, and yet flatter your selves with a dream of peace, know this for a truth, *the Lord will not spare thee, he that made thee will not have mercy on thee*, his jealousie will smoak against thee, and all the eurses written in this Book shall ly upon thee, and thy name shall be blotted out from under Heaven. It was unbelief of Gods Threatning, that first ruined man,

is this ſtill that keeps ſo many from the remedy, and makes their miſery irrecoverable. The Serpent brought them to this queſtion, *Hath God ſaid ye ſhall die?* And then preſently the queſtion intertained becometh a concluſion, *ye ſhall not ſurely die.* Thus ye ſee how the lyar, from the beginning, was contrair to the God of Truth: And he murdered us by lying of that God of Truth: And it is the ſame that ſhuts out all hope of remedy. Ye do not as yet believe and conſider that curſe that was pronounced againſt *Adam*, but is now alſo inflicted upon us; Therefore there is no ſolid belief can be of the promiſes of the Goſpel: And ye who think ye believe the Goſpel, do but indeed fancy it, except ye have conſidered the true curſe of God on all fleſh. But if any man have ſet to his ſeal that God is true in his Threatning, and ſubſcribed unto the Law; Then I beſeech you add not the unbelief of the Goſpel unto your former diſobedience. *He is a God of truth*, in Promiſes and Threatnings. It is ſtrange how untoward and froward we are, a perverſe generation, we do not believe his Threatnings, but fancie we receive his Promiſes, or elſe believeing his Threatnings, we queſtion his Promiſes. But know this for a truth, his laſt Word is more weighty, and the unbelief of it is moſt dangerous. Ye have not keeped his Commands, and ſo the curſe is come upon you, do ye believe that? If ye do, then the Goſpel ſpeakes unto you, The God of Truth hath one word more, *He that believes ſhall be ſaved*, notwithſtanding of all his breaking of the Law; if ye do not ſet your Seal to this alſo, then ye

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ſay he is not a God of Truth, ye ſay he is a liar. And as for you who have committed your Souls to him, as to a faithful keeper, and acquieſced unto his Word of Promiſe for Salvation, think how unſutable it is, for you to diſtruſt him in other leſſer things. Ye have the promiſe of this life, whoever hath the Promiſes of the life to come. Therefore do not make him a liar in theſe, *He is a God of Truth*, and will let you want no good thing. *Say to the righteous it ſhall be well with him*, what ever be; Let Heaven and Earth mix through other, yet ye may be as Mount Sion unmoved in the midſt of many floods, becauſe of the Promiſes.

Without iniquity:] who doubts of that, ſay ye? What needs this be added, who charges him with iniquity or ſin? Nay, but ſtay and conſider, and you ſhall find great weight in this. It is true none dare charge him openly, or ſpeak in expreſſe terms againſt his Holineſſe, yet if we judge of our own and others practices and diſpoſitions, as the Lord uſeth to conſtruct of them; if we reſolve our murmurings, impatience, ſelf-abſolutions and excuſes to hold off convictions, into plain language, if we would tranſlate them into a Scripture-ſtyle, certainly it will be found, that the moſt part of men, if not all, uſe to impute iniquity to God, and accuſe him rather, then take with accuſations laid againſt themſelves. And therefore the Lord uſeth to go to Law with his people, he who is the Judge of the world, that cannot do unrighteouſly, *he who is the potter, and we all the clay*, yet he ſo far condeſcends to us for convincing us as

ſometimes to refer the controverſie between him and his people, to other creatures, as *Micah* 6. 12. He calls the mountains and the foundations of the earth to judge between him and his people, and ſometimes he appeals unto their own conſciences and is content though judge, to ſtand and be judged by theſe who were guilty, as verſ. 3, and *Jer.* 2. verſ. 5, and 31. All this ſuppoſes that when the Lord would endeavour to convince them of iniquity, they did rather recriminat and took not with their own faults. This is a truth generally acknowledged by all. *He who is the judge of the world doth no iniquity*, But O! that ye conſidered it, till the meditation of it were engraven on your Spirits, the ſeal of Gods holineſſe, that ye might fear before him, and never call him to accompt for his matters. Who can ſay I have purged my heart from iniquity? Among men the holieſt are defiled with it, and ſo are all their actions. But here is one that ye may give him an implicit faith (ſo to ſpeak) *he is a God of truth*, and can ſpeak no lie, *he does no iniquity*, and cannot do wrong to any man. Would there be ſo much impatience amongſt you, and fretting againſt his diſpenſations, if ye believed this ſolidly? Would ye repine againſt his holy and juſt wayes, were it not to charge God with iniquity? Your murmuring and grudging at his diſpenſations is with child of blaſphemies, and he who can ſearch the reins ſees it and conſtructs ſo of it: You ſay by interpretation, that if ye had the government of your own matters, or of Kingdoms, ye would order them better then he doth; how difficult a thing is it to perſwade men to take with their own iniquity? O how many

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excuſes and pretences, how many extenuations are uſed that this conviction may not pierce deeply? But all this ſpeaks ſo much blaſphemy, that iniquity is in God. Ye cannot take with your own iniquities, but ye charge his Majeſty with iniquity.

Juſt and right is he:] Is this any new thing, was it not ſaid already, that he is *without iniquity*, and *his wayes judgement*? But alas, how ignorant are we of God, and ſlow of heart to conceive him as he is, therefore is there *line upon line, and precept upon precept*, and name upon name, if it be poſſible that at length we may apprehend God as he is: Alas, our knowledge is but ignorance, our light darkneſſe, while it is ſhut up in the corner of our mind, and ſhines not into the heart, and hath no influence on our practice. And the truth is, the belief of divine truths is almoſt no more but a not contradicting them, we do not ſeriouſly think of them as either to conſent to them, or deny them. Is there any conſideration amongſt us now of Gods juſtice and righteouſneſſe, though it be frequently ſpoken of? And what advantage ſhall ye have if ye do not conſider them? O how hard is it to perſwade mens hearts of this, that God is juſt, and will by no means acquit the guilty, there are ſo many deluſions drunk in in mens hearts, contrary to his truth; *Let no man deceive you, be not deceived with vain words, know ye not*, ſaith our Apoſtle, theſe are ſtrange preſaces, would ye not think the point of truth ſubtile, that there needed ſo much prefacing unto, and yet what is it? even that which all men grant, Gods wrath comes on the children of diſobedi-

obedience, but alas, few men conſider but deceive themſelves with dreams of eſcaping it, though men know it, yet they know it not, for they walk as if they knew no ſuch thing.

Alwayes however this is of little moment to affect our ſpirits now, yet in the day that God ſhall ſet your iniquities before your face, and ſet his juſtice alſo before your eyes, O how ſad and ſerious a thing will it be then? If theſe two verſes were ingraven on our hearts, Gods juſtice and holineſſe, our corruption and vileneſſe, I think there would be other thoughts among us then there are.

SERMON IV.

Deut. 32.5 *They have corrupted themſelves, their ſpot is not the ſpot of his Children*, &c.

WE doubt this people would take well with ſuch a deſcription of themſelves, as *Moſes* gives: It might ſeem ſtrange to us, that God ſhould have choſen ſuch a people out of all the nations of the earth, and they to be ſo rebellious and perverſe, if our own experience did not teach us, how free his choiſe is, and how long ſuffering he is, and conſtant in his choiſe. His people are called to a conformity with himſelf. *Be ye holy, for I am holy.* Lev. ch. 19. and 20. and to a diſformity and ſeparation from the reſt of the world in their converſation from whom God

God had ſeparated them in profeſſion and priviledges: Lev. 18. 24 But behold what unlikeneſſe there is between God and his people. If ye were to paint out to the life a heathen people, you needed no other image or patern to coppy at but this ſame deſcription of this people. It is this that makes *Moſes* in the preface turn to the heavens and earth, and call them to hear his ſong: And *Iſaiah* begin̄eth his Preaching thus, *Hear O Heavens, and give ear, O Earth* &c. A ſtrange thing it muſt be, that ſenſeleſſe creatures are called to wonder at. It muſt ſurpaſſe all the wonders and prodigies of nature and art: And what is that? *I have nouriſhed and brought up children, and they have rebelled againſt me*, &c. If we conſider what this people ſeemed once to be, and thought themſelves to be, we may eaſily know how they corrupted themſelves. If ye look on them at one time. *Exod.* 19. 8. and *Deut.* 5. 27. Ye would call them *Children*. There was never a fairer undertaking of obedience then this, *All that the Lord hath ſpoken, we will do*. So that the Lord commends them for ſpeaking well. v. 28. *They have well ſaid all that they have ſpoken.* v. 29. *O that there were ſuch an heart in them.* But compare all this peoples practice with this profeſſion, and you ſhall find it exceeding contrary; they indeed corrupted themſelves, though they got warning to take heed of it: *Take ye therefore good heed unto your ſelves leſt ye corrupt your ſelves*, *Deut.* 4. 15, 16. But alas, it was within them that deſtroyed them; there was not ſuch a heart in them, as to hear & obey; but they undertake, being ignorant of their own deceitful hearts, which were deſperatly wicked. And therefore

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behold what corruption enſued and followed upon ſuch a profeſſed reſolution, They never ſooner promiſed obedience, but they diſobeyed, they did abominable works, and did no good, and this is to corrupt their way, *Pſa.* 14. 1, &c. we need not inſtance this longer in this people, we our ſelves are a ſufficient proof of it. We may make this ſong our own, we have corrupted our ſelves. Once we had a fair ſhew of zeal for God, of love and deſire of reformation of life, many ſolemn undertakings were that we ſhould amend our wayes and doings. But what is the fruit of all? Alas, we have corrupted our ſelves more nor they. Iſrael promiſed, but we vowed and ſwore to the moſt high, Reformation and amendment of life in our converſations and callings. Lay this Rule to our practiſes, and are we not a perverſe and crooked generation. Oh that we were more affected with our corruptions, and were more ſenſible of them, then we could not chooſe but mourn for our own and the lands departing from God. Did not every man vow and ſwear to the moſt high God to endeavour reformation of his life, even a perſonal reformation? But alas, where is it? *He that is filthy is filthy ſtill*, nay, which is worſe, the evil man waxeth worſe and worſe; There is a great noiſe of a publick reformation of ordinances and worſhip, but alas, the deformation of life and practice outcryes all that noiſe. Nay, certainly all that is done in the publick, muſt come to no accompt before God, ſince our practices outcry it. Publick reformation is abomination where perſonal corruptions do not ceaſe: This made the Jews ſolemn dayes hateful, *their hands were*

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full of blood. Isai. 1. all that ye have spent on the publick will never be reckoned, since ye will not consecrat your lives to God, will not give your lusts up to him. Ye are his enemies in the mean time, though you accompt your selves Religions friends. I beseech you consider your wayes; would any of us have thought to have seen such profanity, mocking of Godlines and ignorance in *Scotland* in so short a time; Nay, it is to be feared that the day is not far off, when ye will corrupt your selves and do abominable things, yea, defile your selves as ill as the nations that know not God.

Every man useth to impute his faults to something beside himself; ere men take with their own iniquity, they will charge God that gave no more grace: But if men knew themselves, they would deduce their corruption and destruction both, from one fountain, that is from themselves. Ignorance of our selves maketh us oft undertake fair, and promise so well on our own head. What was the fountain of this peoples corruption, and apostatizing from their professions? The Lord hints at it, *Deut.* 5. 25, &c. *Oh that they had such a heart.* Alas, poor people, ye know not your selves, that speak so well, I know thee better then thou doest thy self; I will declare unto thee thy own thought, thou hast not such a heart as to do what thou sayest, there is a desperat wicked heart within thee, that will destroy thee by lying unto thee. If thou knewest this fountain of original corruption, thou would despair of doing, and say, I cannot serve the Lord. Now here is the fountain of the Lands corruption this day: why is our way corrupted? because

becauſe our hearts within were not cleanſed, and becauſe they were not known. If we had dryed up the fountain, the ſtreams had ceaſed: but we did only damn it up, and cut off ſome ſtreams for a ſeaſon; we ſet up our reſolutions and purpoſes as an hedge to hold it in; but the ſea of the hearts iniquity, that is above all things, hath overflowed it, and defiled our way more then in former times. Ye thought upon no other thing, but that preſently ye would be all changed people, and would reform without more adoe. And thus it is with you in all your publick repentances. But alas, you know not your ſelves; it is ſtill within you, which will yet corrupt you; and it was within us that hath undone us. We were too confident of our ſelves, and it is no wonder that the Lord ſuffer us to prove our ſelves, that we may know what is in our heart. Now therefore ſince ye have ſo often tryed it, I beſeech you, follow not ſuch a way again. Ye are called to *deny your ſelves, and to follow Chriſt*; and this is a great part of it, that ye may never expect for any good within your ſelves, or the helping of any evil. *In me is thy help found.* Look to the fountain of Life Jeſus Chriſt, and deſpair of your own hearts, for they are deſperatly wicked, ſo wicked, that if ye knew them, ye would deſpair of them, and give them over to another hand, who can creat a new heart within you. Ye uſe to impute your back-ſlidings to the times, to temptations, to company and ſuch like. This is the way that men ſhift the challenges of ſin: The drunkard puts it on his companion, the ſervant on his maſter that led him wrong, ye people put Rulers in

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the fault, and absolve themselves, and Rulers put one another in the wrong, and absolve themselves. But alas! all of us are ignorant of our selves: It is not times nor temptations that corrupt us, but our selves. *No man is tempted* (sayeth James) *of God, but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed, James.* 1. 14. Temptation were no temptation, if our hearts were not wicked hearts. Nay, many of us are ready to tempt temptations, to provoke the devil to temptations: we cast our selves open to temptations. Temptation finds lust within, and lust within is the Mother to conceive sin, if temptation be the father. Times do not bring evils along with them, they do but discover what was hid before: all the evils and corruptions you see now among us, where were they in the day of our first love, when we were as a loving and beloved child? have all these risen up of late. No certainly, all that you have seen and found were before, though they did not appear: before they were in the root, now you see the fruit. All the Apostacy, and profanity that hath been vented in these dayes, it was all shut up within the corners of mens hearts at the beginning; time and temptation hath but uncovered the heart and made the inside out; hath but opened a sluce to let out this sea of corruption, Its not bred since, but seen since.

Now so it is with us, we have corrupted our selves, and so we corrupt our selves still more. Backsliding cometh on as gray hairs, here and there, and is not perceived by beholders. *Nemo repente fit turpissimus.* No man becometh worst at first; There are many steps between that

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and good. Corruption comes on mens way as in fruits, ſome one part beginneth to alter, and then it groweth worſe, and putrifieth, and corrupteth the reſt of the parts. An Apple rotes not all at once, ſo it is with us; men begin at leiſure, but they run poſt or all be done. In ſome one ſtep of our way we take liberty, and think to keep the reſt clean: But when that part is corrupted, *a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*, and all followeth; And then he that corrupted himſelf, is ready to corrupt others. *Children that are corrupters*, Iſa. 1. 4. Every one by his example corrupts another; and by corrupting others, they again corrupt themſelves more. O! how infectious an evil is ſin, of a peſtilentious nature; And truely our hearts are more ready to receive ſuch impreſſions, then either a World, or a Devil is to make them.

Their ſpot is not] Why doth the Lord take pleaſure to reckon their ſins, to deſcribe ſo abominable a People. Is not this *Jacob in whom he ſaw no iniquity*? Is not this *Iſrael, whoſe tranſgreſſions are not known*? Certainly if this people would have charged themſelves ſo, he would not have done it. He loves to forget, when we remember our ſins; But he muſt remember them, when we forget them. What is the Lords great controverſie with men, here it is, how can ye ſay or think that ye are not polluted? Or if ye take with ſuch a General; Yet, why is not the conviction of your ſin and miſery ſo deeply engraven, as to purſue you out of all hope of remedy in your ſelves, *Jer.* 2. 22, 23. *And therefore is thine iniquity marked before me*,

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ſaith the Lord. God hath determined not to wrong his Juſtice. If men ſhould go away unpuniſhed and unjudged both, where were his Righteouſnes? If there were no record of mens tranſgreſſions, were he a righteous Judge? Therefore, thoſe who do not judge themſelves, muſt leave judgement to him; For once the mouth of *all fleſh muſt be ſtoped, and all become guilty before God.* Why pleads the Lord with man? Becauſe man ſayes *I am innocent, I have not ſinned, his anger will turn away*, Jer. 2. 35. Will any ſpeak ſo in termes? No indeed, but the Lord conſtructs ſo of the moſt part; becauſe they do more conſider the wrongs done to them, nor their own wrongs done to God: All men confeſſe the general, that they are ſinners; but who ſearches and tryes his way to find out particulares, and in as far as ye do not charge your ſelves with particular guiltineſſe, until ye be afraid of his anger, as long as the conſideration of your ſins is ſo ſuperficial and ſhallow, that ye apprehend no danger of wrath, or immunity from it, certainly God will plead with you. Juſtice muſt ſo far be glorified, as once to conclude you under the ſentence of death; If ye do it not now, then ye leave God to be your Judge and Party. But if any man ſhall take with his guiltineſſe, till his mouth be ſtopped, and condemne himſelf in Gods ſight; I ſay Mercy and Grace in God muſt not be wronged, *he that judges himſelf, ſhall not be judged of the Lord.* VVhat a fair offer is this to you all? The Lord offers to you, if ye will in time be your own judges, I will reſigne my judgement to you; If ye will

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but in earneſt paſſe the ſentence, I will nather paſſe it nor execute it. If ye come to the Mediator Chriſt Jeſus, to eſcape from the wrath of a Judge, you ſhall meet with a reconciled Father, and with ſuch love in him, as ſhall hide a multitude of offences. O! the depth and height, and breadth of that Love! VVell then, it ſhall be a Sea to caſt your offences into, that ſhall drown them. Had not his people many ſpots? Is there any man can ſay, *I have cleanſed my heart from iniquity?* No, not one. Yet behold, he ſees no ſpots in his people: He doth not make them his people becauſe ſpotleſſe, but he ſeeth them ſpotleſſe, becauſe he makes them his people. There is no covering that can hide mens uncleanneſſe from his piercing eye, but one, even Jeſus Chriſt his Righteouſneſſe; And *bleſt is he whoſe ſins are covered*: If this covering were ſpread over the mouth of all Hell, then Hell ſhould have a covering from his Eyes. If ye therefore ſtrip your ſelves naked of your own pretences and leaves, and think not your ſelf ſecure under any created ſhelter; if ye hide not your iniquity, then it ſhall be hid indeed; Here is a covering that ſhall hide it from his Eyes. There is no ſpot ſo heinous, none ſo ingrained, but the Blood of Jeſus can waſh it as perfectly out, as if it had never been, *Iſai.* 16. 17. Though your ſpots were ſuch as are not incident to his Children, yet this Blood cleanſes from one and all, it is of an infinite nature. But though it be ſo, that *the Blood of Chriſt cleanſeth from all ſin, that there is a fountain opened in the houſe of David for ſin and for uncleanneſs*, for ſin and ſeparation, for ſuch hainous offences as may

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ſeparat people, even from the Congregation of the Lords people. Yet there are ſome ſins, ſome ſpots that ordinarly his people are not defiled with, and in this reſpect they may be called *holy and undefiled in the way*. There are ſome Marks and Characters of unregenerated men, ſo legible and expreſſe, that we may even read from mens Converſation, that they are not the Children of God. Though the blood of Chriſt waſh from all, yet the child of God ordinarily is kept from ſome kind of ſpots, ſo that if a man ſhall be ſpotted with them, its no marvel he queſtion if he be a child or not. There are two, which I think ſo groſs and unclean ſpots, that I cannot conceive how a ſoul waſhen by Jeſus Chriſt, can be defiled with them; one is, a courſe of profanity; the common walk of the multitude is ſo groſſe and profane, ſo void of God and godlineſſe, that it witneſſeth to their face that they are not the ſons of God: *He that is born of God ſinneth not*; he maketh not ſin his way and trade to walk into, and pleaſe himſelf into. What are the moſt part of you, I pray you? Is your ſpot like the ſpot of his children? Do not ye declare your ſin as *Sodom*, ye drunkards, who wallow in it daily, and though ye profeſſe repentance, yet never amend? Ye who have a cuſtome of ſwearing and blaſpheming his holy Name, do not ye carry in your fore-head a ſpot that is not like his children? The child of God may fall in many particulars, but it is not the ſpot of a child to continue in them, to add drunkenneſſe to thirſt, and yet to dream of eſcaping wrath. I pray you conſider it; for it is of great moment.

Do

Do ye carry such a black mark, the devils mark? O! do not think your selves safe. May not this perswade you? Do but compare your selves in your converse and walk with an heathen without the Church, set aside your publick profession of coming to the Church and hearing the word and Church priviledges: And is there difference visible between you and them? Many of you pray no more in secret, or in your families nor they; ye curse and swear as they, ye are covetous and worldly as they; And if ye can, do but draw a line of difference? and if ye cannot, then I ask what are ye? Is not this the spot of Bastards? Another spot is, hatred of Godliness and the Godly, this is indeed the most lively image of the Devil; *Who hates his brother is of the Devil.* He that hats the Son can he love the Father: He that hats him that is begotten, hats also him that begat him: And he that loves him that begat, loves him that is begotten. Now how can he be begotten of God, who hates that nature he is said to partake of, who hats him that is begotten? I wonder that many of your consciences are not touched with this? how can ye imagine ye are children of God, when there is none of your neighbours that your heart riseth more against, that ye can least abide, nor those who seek God most diligently, whose conversation is different from the worlds. Do not flatter your selves, as if it were Hypocrisie ye hated? No, no, ye can agree with prosanity, and how can ye hate Hypocrisie? ye can agree with a profane hypocrite, with a profane man, that feigns and dissembles repentance, but if once he were so throughly changed, as to hate his former

mer way and forſake it, then your antipathy beginneth. What a ridiculous thing is it, for profanity to take upon it to cenſure hypocriſie? Certainly if profanity caſt out with hypocriſie, it muſt be becauſe it hath a form of godlineſſe, which it ſo much deteſteth. It is a ſtrange hatred at godlineſſe that a profane man hath, that he cannot abide the very ſhadow of it. I beſeech you who love not holineſſe in your own perſons, who hate to be reformed your ſelves, do not add this hight of ſin to it, as to hate it in others alſo. If ye be not godly your ſelves, do not add this declared manifeſt character of a child of the devil to it, to hate godlineſſe in others. There were ſome hope of you, if ye held it in reverence and eſtimation where ye ſaw it. There are many other ſpots not incident to his children, as this, that men will not take with their ſin and the curſe; it is a great difficulty to convince the moſt part of men how miſerable they are, how void of God: all the world will not put them out of a good opinion of themſelves: And I think this hath been the ſpot of this people; they would not take with their guiltineſſe, a ſtubborn-hearted people, whole-hearted. There needs no more to declare a number of you not to be Gods children, but this, ye have lived all your time in the opinion and belief that ye were Gods children, that ye believed in him; ye never ſaw your ſelves loſt and miſerable. This was the ſpot of this people that they eſteemed themſelves children, though they had many ſpots that teſtified to their face that they were no children; they waxed worſe and worſe, neither mercies nor judgements amended them: When

be

he slew them, it may be, *they sought him, and flattered him with their mouth, but their hearts were not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his Covenant*, Psal. 78. 34. Ye would have thought them a godly people while under the rod for a season, but all that was but extorted and pressed out by violence of affliction, as the groans of a beast under a burden; but a little time declared that it was but flattery, though they thought themselves ingenuous, and therefore they returned to their old provocations, as a sow to the puddle, or a dog to his vomit. And is not this our spot, even the spot of great and small; If any would look upon us in our ingadgements and vows under trouble, we appear like his people, a praying, repenting, and believing people. But how quickly doth all this prove flattery? Do we not still return to our old wayes, that we have been examplarly punished for, and which we so solemnly ingaged against. The heat of the furnace dieth out, and they waxe colder and harder, a little time wears away all their tenderneſſe: every man to his own things, *and no man seeks the things of Jesus Christ*. This was this peoples sin and spot. *Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked, and lightly esteemed the Rock of their Salvation*. When their heads were lifted up to Government, when they were raised out of the waters of affliction and poverty; Then they forgat God, they oppressed the poor and needy, eat up his people as bread, and could not abide to have their faults told them, they *said to the Seers, see not, and to the Prophets prophesie not unto us right things* &c. Isai. 30. 10. I think likewise, that oppression is not the spot of his Children, whoever use it.

And

And covetouſneſſe preſſes men to it, when power is in their hand to compaſſe it: This is a vile ſpot, unworthy of any Ruler, let be a Chriſtian: It was abhored among Pagans. O! but *it cries to heaven*, (ſayeth the Scripture) it hath a double cry when other ſins cry once. The heinouſneſſe of it cryeth once, and the poor people cry again, and both theſe come up to the Ears of the Lord of Hoſts; Nay, it hath the cry of Murther and another beſide. He that is greedy of gain, is ſaid *to take away the life of the owners thereof*, Pro. 1. 19. So he is a Murtherer before God, and the poor mans blood crieth for vengeance, and then himſelf ſeconds it either by prayer, or crying out for miſery, *Job.* 35. 9. All mens prayers and profeſſions will not outcry theſe two. The peoples many prayers could not be heard, *Iſai.* 1. 15. *becauſe their hands were full of blood*, which had a louder cry then their prayers. The poor alſo oppreſſing the poor, is like a ſweeping rain that leaves nothing behind it.

It is read in the Margin, that they are not his Children, this is their blot. And indeed it is ſo; It is a great blot and ſtain in the face of any man whoever he be, that he is not born of God, that he can reckon kindred to none but *Adam*; But what indignity is it and diſgrace for a people profeſſing his Name, yet to have no other Generation, to reckon no higher then the Earth and the Earthly. What is now the great blot of our viſible Church? Here it is, the moſt part are not Gods Children, but called ſo; And it is the greater blot that they are called ſo, and are not. O poor Saints eſteem your ho-

nour and high priviledge, ye have received this *to be the ſons of God.* It is no blot to you, that ye are poor and deſpiſed in the World: But it is and ſhall be an eternal blot, to the great and rich and wiſe in the World, that they are not the Children of God. Chriſtianity is no blot, though it be in reproach among men, but it is really the glory and excellency of a man; but the want of it, alas, how doth it abaſe many high and noble, empoveriſh many rich, and infatuat many wiſe? Ye think all of you are the Children of God, becauſe ye are in the Church, and partake of the Ordinances and Sacraments: and ſo did this people. But *Moſes* did not flatter theſe Jews, but told both Princes and People in their face, that they were not Children of God, becauſe only *Iſrael* in the letter, they had not childrens manners. Oh! that it might not be ſaid of the moſt part of you, *that ye are not children of God*, and that that is your blot and ſhame. It is the ſhame of Rulers, not to be the Children of God. They are Wiſe, they are Active, they are Noble, but one Spot diſgraceth all, one fly maketh their Oyntment ſtink, they are not gracious, many of them but ſons of men at the fartheſt reckoning, are not begotten again to a lively Hope. *Not many Wiſe, not many Noble, not many Rich.* The ſcantneſſe of gracious men, is the Spot of Judicatories, that there are many Children of the World, but few Children of Light in them. O! how beautiful and glorious would Judicatories be, if all the Members were Children of Light? What glory would there be, if all of them did ſhine and enlightened one another

But what beauty or comelineſſe, what Majeſty can be in Rulers, or Judicatories, when the Image of God is not in them? This is alſo the Spot of Aſſemblies, Synods, Preſbytries, that there are few godly Miniſters. Alas that this complaint ſhould be, even among thoſe, whoſe Office it is to beget many Children to God, how few of them are begotten, or hath the Image of their Father? And thus Church-Aſſemblies have no beauty, ſuch as the Courts of Jeſus Chriſt ſhould have. O! that we were in love with Chriſtianity and Grace, that it were our grand queſtion, how ſhall I be put among the Children? The Lord ſeems to wonder at it and make a queſtion of it, *How can ſuch as we be put among the Children?* Jer. 3. 19. But he anſwers it himſelf, *thou ſhalt call me, my Father, and ſhalt not turn away from me.* There is no more, but take with your wanderings, and wrongs done to God; Imbrace him in Jeſus Chriſt, and he becomes your Father, and if ye be Children, ſure ye will reſolve to abide in your Fathers houſe, and turn no more to a preſent world, or your former luſts.

They are a perverſe and crooked generation] What pleaſure hath the Lord in ſpeaking thus, when he upbraids none? Certainly, in a manner it is drawn out of him. Would he object our faults, if we did not defend them by obſtinacy. Perverſneſſe and crookedneſs is obſtinacy and incorrigibleneſſe againſt Mercies and Judgements. *That which is crooked, cannot be made ſtraight,* ſaith Solomon. Then doth the Lord take notice of ſins, when men refuſe to re-

return, and so maintain their sins. It is this which hightens provocations and makes our the controversy, perverseness in sin. It is not ordinary common infirmities that the Lord punisheth, either in a Land or Person; but when infirmities are discovered by the Light of the Word, when the Lord useth means to reclaim men in his Providence, and yet no means prevail; then are they reckoned perverse. Now perverseness is not the spot of his Children: The Child of God daily bowes, and folds to him, receives challenges from him, taks with iniquity, and yields unto God. O that this Title might not be written above the head of this generation deservedly. This is a perverse and crooked generation.

SERMON V.

Psal. 73. 28. *But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy Works.*

After mans first transgression he was shut out from the Tree of Life, and cast out of the Garden, by which was signified, his seclusion and sequestration from the presence of God, and communion with him: And this was in a manner the extermination of all mankind in one, when *Adam* was driven out of Paradise.

Now

low this had been an eternal ſeparation for ny thing that we could do (for we can do no- hing, but depart by a perpetual backſliding, and make the diſtance every day wider) except it had pleaſed the Lord of his infinite Grace, to condeſcend to draw near to us in gracious Promiſes and offers of a Redeemer. If he had not made the firſt journey from Heaven to Earth, by ſending his only Son, we ſhould have given over the hope of returning from Earth to Heaven. But he hath taken away the greateſt part of that diſtance, in drawing near to our Nature; yea, in aſſuming our Fleſh into the fellowſhip of his glorious Divinity. He hath ſtooped ſo low to meet with us, and offered himſelf the tryſting place between God and us, a fit meeting place, where there is an conjunction of the intereſts of both Parties. And now there is no more to do, but to draw near to God in Jeſus Chriſt, ſince he hath made the great journey to come down to us. We have not that infinite gulfe of ſatiſfaction to Juſtice to paſſe over, we have not the height of Divine Majeſty, as he is infinitely above us, and offended with us, to climb up unto. Certainly we could not but fall into the Lake that is below us, if we were to aim ſo high. But the Lord hath been pleaſed to deſcend to us, in our mean capacity in the Fleſh, and fill up that immenſurable gulfe of Juſtice, by the infinite merits and ſufferrings of his Son in our Fleſh. And now he invites us, he requeſts us to come to him in his Son and have life. We are not come to Mount Sinai, that might not be touched, that burnt with Fire and Tempeſt, where there were

terrible fights and intollerable noises. I say such a God we might have had to do with, a consuming fire, instead of instructing light; A devouring fire, instead of a healing Sun of Righteousnesse, considering that there is nothing in us, which is not fit and prepared fuel for everlasting burnings. But we are come (and that is the eternal wonder of Angels) unto Mount Sion, to be Citizens in the City of God, and fellow citizens with blessed Angels and glorified Spirits, to Peace and Reconciliation with him who was our Judge. And if you ask how this may be? I answer, because we have one Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant to come to, whose Blood cryeth louder for pardon of sinners, then all mens transgressions can cry for punishment of sinners, *Heb.* 12. 18, 19, 20. *&c.*

Let us then Consider the first step and degree of Union with God, it consists in Faith in Jesus Christ. This is the first motion of the Soul in drawing near to God; For, *as there is no remission without Blood*; So no accesse to God without a Mediator. For if you consider what is in Jesus Christ, you will find that which will engage the desire of the heart; as also, that which will give boldnesse and confidence to act that desire. Eternal Life is promised and proposed in him, he offers rest to weary souls, and hath it to give. That which we ignorantly and vainly seek elsewhere, here it is to be found. For Personal Excellencies, he is the chief infinitely beyond comparison; And for Suitablenesse to us and our necessities, all the Gospel is an expression of it: So that he is presented in the

ne moſt attractive drawing manner that can be imagined. And then when the deſires are inflamed, yet if there be no Oyl of hope to feed it, it will ſoon cool again. Therefore take a view again, and you may have boldneſſe to enter into the Holieſt by the Blood of Jeſus. There was ſome kind of diſtance kept in the Old Teſtament, none but the High Prieſt might enter into the Holieſt Place; But the entry of our High Prieſt into it, that is into Heaven, hath made it patent to all that come to him and apply his Blood. There is a new and living way by the holy fleſh of Chriſt, conſecrated and made of infinite value and uſe, by the Divinity of his Perſon: And therefore, having ſuch a one of our kindred ſo great with God, *we may draw near with a true heart, and full aſſurance of faith, having our conſciences ſprinkled*, &c. *Heb.* 10. 18 19. 20. &c. Now, ſince the way is made plain to you, and the entry is opened up in the Goſpel; Do you not find your hearts ſtir within you to draw near to him? Do you not find a neceſſity of making peace by ſuch a Mediator? O! that you knew the great diſtance between God and your Natures, and what the hazard is: *Loe, they that are far from thee ſhall periſh*: Then certainly, you would take hold of this invitation, and be eaſily drawn unto Jeſus Chriſt. But unto you who have adventured to draw near for pardon of ſin in Chriſt; I would recommend unto you, that you would draw yet nearer to God. After that the partition wall of wrath and condemnation is removed; yet there is much darkneſſe in your minds, and corruption in our natures that ſepa-

rats from him. I mean intercepts and disturbs that blessed communion you are called unto. Therefore I would exhort you, as James, *draw near to God, and he will draw near to you*, ch. 4. 8. And that, wherein this most consists, is in studying that purification of our natures, that cleansing of our hearts from guile, and our hands from offences, by which our Souls may draw towards a resemblance of God. This accesse and drawing near to God in assimilation, and conformity of nature, is the great designe of the Gospel, *Be ye holy, for I am holy.* Now ye are agreed, *walk with him*, Amos 3. 3. *As Enoch walked with God*, Gen. 5. 24. That is, labour in all your conversation, to set him before your eyes, and to study to be well pleased with him in all things, and to please him in all, to conform your selves to his pleasure in every thing. And this Communion in walking, especially consists, in that Communication of the Spirit with God in prayer: This is the nearest and sweatest approach, when the Soul is lifted up to God, and is almost out of it self in him: And this being the ordinary exercise and motion of the Soul, it exceedingly advances in the first point of nearnesse, that is, in conformity with God. Drawing often near in Communion with him in prayer, makes the Soul draw towards his likenesse, even as much converse of men together, will make them like one another.

Now for the commendation of this, *It is good*; What greater evil can be imagined then separation from the greatest Good? And what greater good, then accession to the greatest Good?

Every

Every thing is in so far happy and well, as it is joyned with and enjoyeth that which is convenient for it. Light is the perfection of the Earth, remove it, and what a disconsolat and unpleasant thing is it? Now truely there is nothing suitable to the immortal Spirit of man, but God; And therefore, all its happinesse or misery must be measured by the accesse or recesse, Nearnesse or distance of that infinite Goodnesse. Therefore, is it any wonder, *that all they that go a whoring from him, perish*, as every mans heart doeth: For we are infinitly bound by Creation, by many other bonds stronger then wedlock, to consecrat and devote our selves wholly to God, but this is treacherously broken: Every man turns aside to vanity and lies, and is guilty of heart whoredome from God and spiritual idolatry, because the Affection that should be preserved chast for him, is prostitute to every base object: So then, this divorcement of the Soul from God, cannot but follow thereupon, even an eternal ecclipse of true and real life and comfort. And whoever draw back from the Fountain of Life and Salvation, cannot but find elsewhere perdition and destruction, *Heb.* 10. *ult.* My beloved, let us set this aside all other things which are the pursuites and endeavours of the most part of men. Mens natural desires are carried towards Health, Food, Raiment, Life and Liberty, Peace and such like. But the more rational sort of men, seek after some shadow of Wisdom and Virtue. Yet the generality of men, both high and low, have extravagant, illimited desires toward Riches, Pleasure, Preferment;

ferment ; And all that we have ſpoken, inclosed within the narrow compaſſe of men abode here, which is but for a moment ; ſo that if it were poſſible, that all theſe forementioned deſires and delights of men, could attend any man for the ſpace of an hundreth years, though he had the concurrance of the ſtreames of the Creatures to bring him in ſatisfaction, though all the world ſhould bow to him and be ſubject to the beck of his authority, without ſtroak of Sword, though all the Creatures ſhnuld ſpend their ſtrength and wit upon his ſatisfaction; yet do but conſider what that ſhall be within ſome few years, when he ſhall be ſpoiled of all that attendance, denuded of all external comforts, when the fatal period muſt cloſe his life, peace, health and all ; and his poor Soul alſo, that was drowned in that gulf of pleaſure, ſhall then find it ſelf robbed of its precious Treaſure, that is, Gods favour, and ſo remain in everlaſting baniſhment from his preſence. Do ye think, I ſay, that man were happy. Nay ! O happy *Lazarus* who is now bleſſed in *Abrahams* boſom, who enjoyes an eternity of happineſſe, for a moments miſery. But my beloved, you know that it is not poſſible, even to attain to that imagined happineſſe here. All the gain that is found, is not able to quit the coſt and expenſe of grief, vexation, care, toy ing and ſweating that is about them.

But if you would be perſwaded, there is that to be found eaſily, which you trouble your ſelves ſeeking elſewhere : And believe me, though the general apprehenſion of men be, that peace, plenty, preferment' and ſatisfaction in this

this life, to compense their pains, is more eamenily attainable then fellowship and communion with God; Yet I am perswaded that there is nothing more practicable then the life of Religion. God hath condemned the World under vanity and a curse, and that which is crooked, can by no art or strength be made straight; But he hath made this attainable, by his gracious Promises, even a blessed life, in approaching near to himself the Fountain of all Life. And this is a certain Good, an universal Good, and an eternal Good. It will not disapoint you as other things do, of which, you have no assurance for all your toylings. This is made more infallible to a soul that truely seeks it in God. It is als certain, that they cannot be ashamed through frustration, as that he is faithful. And then it is an universal Good, one comprehensive of all, one eminently and virtually all things created, to be joyned to the infinite all-fulnesse of God: This advanceth the Soul to a participation of all that is in him. This is health, *Psal.* 42. last, *Prov.* 3. 8. This is light, *Jo.* 8. 12. It is life, *Jo.* 11. 25. Liberty, *Job.* 8. 36. Food and Raiment, *Isai.* 61. 10. And *Jo.* 4. 14. And what not? It is profit, pleasure, preferment in the superlative degree, and not scattered in so many various streames, which divide and distract the heart, but all conbined in one. It is the true Good of both Soul and Body, and so the only Good of man. And lastly it is eternal, to be coætaneous with thy Soul: Of all other things it may be said, *I have seen an end of them*, they were and are not: but this will survive time, and all the changes of it, and then it will

will begin to be perfect, when all perfection ney at an end. Now from all this, I would exhoive you in Jesus Christ, to ponder those things iatic your hearts, and consider them in referencainl to your own Souls, that ye may say witheco David, *It is good for me to draw near to God.* o, v of es

That which all men seek after, is happinesse whil and well being. Men pursue nothing but under the notion of Good; And to compleathere that which may be called Good, there is requir- er, ed some excellency in the thing it self, and then this a conveniency and suitableness to us; And ing these joyntly draw the heart of man. But the an great misery is, that there is so much ignorance ly and misapprehension of that which is truely th Good; And then when any thing of it is known, di there is so little serious consideration and appli- m cation of it to our selves; And this makes the w most part of men wander up and down in the R pursuit of divers things, which are not that true b Good of the Soul, and set their hearts on that r which is not, until they find their hearts fall down, as wanting a foundation, and then they turn about again to some other vanity. And so the wanderings and strayings of men are infinite, because the by-wayes are innumerable, though the true way be but one. Yea, the turnings, and toylings of one man are various and manifold, because, he quickly losses the sent of happinesse in every way he falls into, and therefore must turn to another. And thus men are never at any solid setting about this great businesse; never resolute wherein this happinesse consists, nor perremptor to follow it; But they

tion ney fluctuat upon uncertain apprehenſions, and exho divers affections, until the time and date of Sal- ngs ivation expire, and then they muſt know cer- renc ainly and ſurely, the inevitable danger and ir- wit recoverable loſſe they have brought themſelves ar to, who would not take notice of the ſure way, of eſcaping both wrath, and attaining happineſſe ne ſſ while it was to be found.

un- Well then, this is the great buſineſſe we have lea here to do; yea, to make the circle the larg- ir- er, it is that great buſineſſe we have to do in en this world, to know wherein the true wellbe- nd ing and eternal wellfare of our Souls conſiſts, he and by any means to apply unto that, as the on- ce ly thing neceſſary, in regard of which, all other y things are Ceremonies, Circumſtances and in- different things. And to guide us in this Exa- mination and Application, here is one man who having almoſt made ſhipwrack upon the Rocks which men commonly daſh upon, and being by the Lord led ſafely by, and almoſt ar- rived at the Coaſt of true Felicity, he ſets out a Beacon, and lights a Candle to all who ſhall follow him, to direct them which way they ſhall ſtirre their courſe. Examples teach more effe- ctually then Rules; It is eaſie for every man to ſpeak well upon this Point in general, and readily all will acknowledge, that here it is, and no where elſe: But yet all this is outcry- ed by the contrary noiſe of every mans practice. Theſe general grants of Truth, are recalled in the converſations of men; Therefore they can- not have much influence upon any man: But when we hear one ſpeak, and ſee him walk ſo too; when we have the example of a moſt

wiſe

wiſe man, who wanted not theſe worldly end
pectations, which other men have; So them
he not only propones it to us, but after mu
ſerious adviſement, after mature conſideratio
of all that can be ſaid, of the wickeds beſt eſta
and the godlies worſt, ſetting down reſolu
concluſions for himſelf. *It is good for me to dra*
near to God; Yea, ſo determinate into it, tha
if none of the world ſhould be of that mind, h
would not change it; Though all ſhould wa
in other ways, he would chooſe to be rathe
alone in this, then in the greateſt croud o
company in any other. Now, I ſay, when w
have ſuch a Coppy caſt us, a man of excellen
parts in ſobriety and ſadneſſe, chooſing tha
way, which all in words confeſſe to be the beſt;
ſhould not this awake us out of our dreams, and
raiſe us up to ſome more attention and conſide-
ration of what we are doing? The words you
ſee, are the holy reſolution of a holy heart, con-
cerning that which is the chiefeſt Good. You
ſee the way to happineſſe, and you find the par-
ticular application of that to *Davids* Soul, or of
his Soul to it. We ſhall ſpeak a word of the
thing it ſelf, then of the commendation of it, then
of the application of it.

For the thing it ſelf, *drawing near to God*, it
gives us ſome ground to take a view of the po-
ſture in which men are found by nature, *far off
from God*. Our condition by nature, I cannot
ſo fitly expreſſe, as in the Apoſtles words, *Eph.*
2. 12. *Without Chriſt, Aliens from the common
wealth of Iſrael, ſtrangers from the Covenant of
Promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the
World.* A deplorable eſtate indeed, hopeleſſe
and

end helpleſſe : No hope in it, that is the extremity of miſery, the refuſe of all conditions. *Without Chriſt, and without God.* O! theſe are words of infinite weight : Without thoſe, without whom it is ſimply impoſſible to be happy : and without whom it is not poſſible but to be miſerable, without the Fountain of Light, Life and Conſolation, without which, there is nothing but pure darkneſſe, without any beam of light ; Nothing but death, without the leaſt breathing of life ; Nothing but vexation, without the leaſt drop of conſolation. In a word, without theſe, and wanting theſe, whom if you want, it were good to be ſpoyled of all beeing, to be nothing, if that could be, or never to have been any thing. Men will ſeek death, and cannot find it. O! what a loſſe and deprivement is the loſſe of God, which makes death more deſireable then life ; and not to be at all, infinitly preferable to any beeing. Now it is true, that the bringing in of multitudes within the pale of the Viſible Church, is ſome degree of acceſſe and nearneſſe to God ; for then they become Citizens (as to external right) in the Common-wealth of the Church, and have the offers of the Promiſes made to them, in reſpect of which viſible ſtanding, the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the whole Church of *Epheſus*. *But now ye are made near who were far off*, v. 13. notwithſtanding, that many of them were found afterwards, to have left their firſt Love, *Rev.* 2. But yet, Beloved, to ſpeak more inwardly, and as your Souls ſtand in the ſight of God. The generality of thoſe who are near hand in outward Ordinanc-

es;

es, are yet far off from God in reality, *without God and without Christ*, as really as touching any Soul feeling, as those who are altogether without. The bond of Peace and Union was broken in Paradise, sin dissolved it, and broke off that nearnesse and friendship with God, and from that day to this day, there hath been an infinite distance and separation betwixt Man and God: The steps and degrees of it are many; There is darknesse and blindnesse in mens minds: Such ignorance naturally possesseth the multitude, so that it wholly Alienats them from the Life of God, *Eph.* 4. 18. For what fellowship can Light, that pure Light, have with such grosse Darknesse as is among us? This certainly, is the removal of that Sun of Righteousnesse from our Souls; or the imposition of the Clouds of transgression, that makes it so dark a night in the Souls of Men. And then there is nothing but enmity and desperate wickednesse in the heart of man, and this keeps the strong hold of the Affections, *Rom.* 8. *Jer.* 17. There cannot be a further elongation or separation of the Soul from God, then to turn so opposite in all inclinations and dispositions to his Holy Will: For the distance between God and us, is not local in the point of place; For whither shall we go from him who is every where? And thus he is near hand every one of us; but it is also real in the disformity and repugnancy of our Natures to his Holy Will. But add unto this, that being thus separated in Affection, and disjoyned as it were, in natural Dispositions, we cannot draw near to God in any Ordinance, as the Word, Prayer, &c. Though

we

may, as that People, draw near with our s, and ask of him our duty, and seem to de- nt to know him ; Yet there is this natural apacity and crookedneſſe in the heart of man, at it cannot truely approach unto the Father Spirits , with any Soul deſire and delight. *their hearts are removed far from me*, Iſa. 6. 9. at. 4. 12. I think men might obſerve, that eir Souls act not in Religious buſineſſe as they ould ; but that they remove their Souls ma- y Myles diſtant from their Bodies, and they annot keep any conſtancy in this approach f Prayer to God, cannot walk with him in their Converſation , or carry him along in their Me- itation. But there is one point of eſtrange- ment and ſeparation ſuperadded to all, that there s no man can come near to God , without an Oblation and Offering of Peace ; That there is no approaching to him , but as to a conſum- ing Fire, except we can bring a Sacrifice to ap- peaſe, and a Preſent to pleaſe him for our infi- nite offences : There the difference ſtands, we cannot draw near to walk together , till we be agreed. And truely , this unto man is impoſ- ſible, for we have nothing ſo precious as the Redemption of our Souls , nothing can com- penſe infinite Wrongs , or ſatiſfie infinite Ju- ſtice. Now this ſeems to make our nearneſs a- gain deſperate, and to put men furtheſt off from Hope.

Notwithſtanding, this is the very purpoſe of the Goſpel, Preached from the beginning of the World , to remove that diſtance , and to take impediments of meeting out of the way ; For that great obſtruction , the want of a Sacrifice, and

and Ranſome, the Lord hath ſupplied it, himſelf hath furniſhed it: And it was great deſigne carried on from the beginning the World: But as the Sun, the nearer is, the more the Earth is Enlightened, ſo h firſt ſome dawning of Light appears, as a M ſenger of Hope, to tell that the Redeemer ſh come, that the True Sacrifice ſhall be ſlai then ſtill the nearer his own appearing the cle er are the Manifeſtations of him, and the gre deſigne is more opened up, till at length breaks out in Glory, from under a Cloud, a ſhews himſelf to the World, to be *that Lamb God that ſhould take away the ſins of the Wo* And now as the Apoſtle to the Hebrewes ſpeak Chap. 7. 19. *The Law made nothing perfect, b the bringing in of a better hope did, by the whic we draw nigh to God.* All the Sacrifices an Shadows that were under the Law, did bu point at this perfect Ranſom, and the way o acceſſe to God through a Mediator was not ſo clear, but now the matter is made as hopeful as is poſſible, the partition wall of the Lawes curſes, the hand-writting againſt us is removed one the Croſſe, the enmity ſlain, the diſtance removed by the Blood of the Croſſe being partly filled up by his deſcent into our Nature, partly by his lower deſcent in our Nature to ſuffer Death. And this is the ſavoury Oblation that we have to preſent to God, and may have boldneſs to come nigh becauſe of it. And when once our acceſſe is made by the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt, then we are called and allowed to come ſtill nigher, to cleave and adhere to him as our Father, to pray unto him, to walk with him;

Then

n we ſhould converſe as Friends and Fami-
rs together, then draw nigh to his Light for
umination, and to him as the Fountain of
fe, for quickening, to place our delight and
ſire in him, to forſake all other things, even
r Wills and Pleaſures, and to loſe them, that
ey may be found in his, to converſe much in
s Company, and be often in Communicati-
with him, and Meditation upon him. This
the very deſigne and ſubſtance of the Goſpel,
holds forth the way of making up the breach
etween Man and God, of bringing you nigh
who are yet afar off, and nearer who are near
and. Oh let us hearken to it.

SER-

SERMON VI.

Prov. 27. 1. *Boast not thy self of to m*
row, for thou knowest not what a day m
bring forth.

THere are some peculiar Gifts that God ha
given to man in his first Creation, and e
dued his Nature with, beyond other livi
Creatures, which being rightly ordered an
improved towards the right Objects, do ad
vance the Soul of man to a wonderful height o
Happinesse, that no other sublunary Creatur
is capable of. But by reason of mans fall into
sin, these are quite disordered, and turned out
of the right Channel; And therefore as the
right improvement of them would make man
happy: so the wrong imployment of them,
loadens him with more real misery, then any
other creature: I mean, God hath given to
man two notable Capacities, beyond other
things, one is, to know and reflect upon him-
self, and to consider what conveniency is in any
thing towards himself, what goodnesse or ad-
vantage redounds to himself from them, and in
that reflection and comparison to enjoy what he
hath. Another is to look forward, beyond the
present time, and as it were, to anticipat and
prevent the slow motions of time, by a kind of
foresight and providence. In a word, he is a
Creature framed unto more understanding
then

n others, and ſo capable of more joy in pre-
t things, and more foreſight of the time to
me ; He is made mortal, yet with an im-
ortal Spirit, of an immortal capacity, that
ath its eye upon the morrow, upon eterni-
. Now herein conſiſts either mans Happi-
ſſe or Miſery, how he reflects upon himſelf,
nd what he chooſeth for the matter of his Joy
nd Gloriation, and what providence he hath
or the time to come. If thoſe be rightly or-
ered, all is well ; but if not, then woe un-
o him, there is more hope of a beaſt then of
him.

Mans Nature inclines to boaſting, to glo-
rying in ſomething, and this ariſeth from ſome
apprehended excellency or advantage, and ſo
is originated in the underſtanding power of
man, which is far above beaſts : Beaſts find
the things themſelves, but they do not, they
cannot reflect upon their own enjoyment of
them ; And therefore they are not capable of
ſuch pleaſure : for the more diſtinct knowledge
of things in relation to our ſelves, the more de-
light enſueth upon it. Many Creatures have
ſingular qualities and vertues, but they are no-
thing the happier ; For they know them not,
and have no uſe of them, but are wholly deſti-
nated to the uſe of man, who therefore is only
ſaid to enjoy them, becauſe he only is capable
of joy from them. And this, I ſuppoſe, may
give us a hint at the abſolute incomprehenſible
Bleſſedneſs, ſelf-complacency and delight of
God ; It cannot but be immeaſurably great,
ſeing the knowledge of himſelf and all crea-
tures is infinite, he comprehends all his own

Pow-

Power and Vertue and Goodneſs; And therefore his Delight and Rejoycing is anſwerable. There is a glorying and boaſting then that is good, which man is naturally framed unto; And this is that which *David* expreſſes, *Pſa.* 34. 2. *My Soul ſhall make her boaſt in God*; And *Pſal.* 44. 8. *In God we boaſt all the day long, and praiſe thy name for ever.* When the Soul apprehends that All-ſufficiency, and ſelf-ſufficient fulneſſe of God; What infinite Treaſures of Goodneſſe, and Wiſdom and Power are in him, and ſo how ſuitable and convenient he is to the condition of the Soul; What a ſweet correſpondence there is between his fulneſſe and our emptineſſe; His Mercy and our Miſery; His Infiniteneſſe and our unſuitableneſſe, that there is in him to fill and overflow the Soul. The apprehenſion of this, cannot but in a manner perfume the Soul with delight. You find how the ſenſes are refreſhed, when they meet with their ſuitable Object; How a pleaſant ſmell refreſheth the ſent; How lively and beautifull colours are delightful to the eye. But much more here, God is the proportioned Object of the immortal Spirit, he correſponds to all its capacities, and fills it with unconceivable ſweetneſs. But, my beloved, boaſting and glorying in him, ariſeth not only from the proportionableneſs and conveniency of him to our Spirits: but this muſt be ſuperadded, propriety in him. Things are loved, becauſe excellent in themſelves, or becauſe they are our own. But we boaſt in nothing, we glory in nothing, but becauſe it is both excellent in it ſelf, and ours beſides. It is the apprehended intereſt in any thing,

thing, makes the Soul riſe and lift up it ſelf after this manner, to have ſuch a one to be ours, ſuch a Lord to be our God, one ſo high and ſublime, one ſo univerſally full to be made over to thee; Here is the immediate rife of the Souls Gloriation. And truely as there is nothing can be ſo ſutable a portion, ſo there is nothing that can be ſo truely made ours as God; Of all things a believer hath, there is nothing ſo much his own as God, nothing ſo indiſſolubly tyed unto him, nothing ſo inſeparably joyned. See *Pauls* Triumph upon that account, *Rom.* 8. Nothing can truely be ſaid to be the Souls own, but that which is not only Coataneous with it, that ſurvives mortality, and the changes of the Body; But likewiſe is inſeparable from it. What a poor empty ſound, is all that can be ſpoken of him, till your Souls be once poſſeſſed of him? It cannot make your hearts leap within you, but it cannot but excite and ſtirre up a Believers heart.

Now there may be a lawful kind of Gloriation Rejoycing in the Works of God, conſequent to the firſt, which is a little ſtream from that greater River which runs out from it, and flows in to it again. A Soul that truely apprehends God, will take delight to view the Works of God, which make ſuch an expreſſion of him, and are a part of the magnificence of our Heavenly Father: But this is all in reference to him and not to our ſelves, for then it degenerats and loſeth its ſweetneſſe, when once it turns the Channel towards the adorning of the Creature. True boaſting in God hath neceſ-

ſarly

ſarly conjoyned with it, an humble and low eſteem of a mans ſelf, *Pſal.* 34. 2. *The humble ſhall hear thereof, and be glade.* As humility and ſelf-emptineſs made *David* go out of himſelf, to ſeek ſatisfaction in God, and having found it, he boaſts and triumphs, ſo there were none capable of underſtanding his triumph, or partaking with him in his delights, but the humble Souls. Now you may perceive, how far this boaſting here ſpoken of, is degenerated from that, and ſo how far mans nature is ſpoiled. *Boaſt not thy ſelf*, &c. The true boaſting we were created unto, hath a ſufficient foundation, even ſuch as will bear the weight of triumph, but that which mens ſpirits are now naturally ſet upon, cannot carry, cannot found ſuch Gloriation; And therefore this boaſting makes men ridiculous. If you ſaw a man glorying in rags, ſetting forth himſelf to be admired in them, or boaſting in ſome vain deſpicable and baſe thing, you would pity him, or laugh at him as one diſtempered. The truth is, Natural man is mad, hath loſt his Judgement, and is under the greateſt diſtraction imaginable ſince the fall: That fall hath troubled his brains, and they are never ſetled, till the new Creation come to put all right again, and compoſe the heart of man. I ſay, all other diſtractions are but particular, in reſpect to particular things: But there is a generall diſtraction over all mankind, in reference to things of moſt general and moſt eternal concernment. Now fools and mad perſons, they retain the ſame affections and paſſi-

ons

ons that are in men, as anger, love, hatred, grief, joy, &c. but it is ſo much the worſe, ſince the judgement, which is the only directive and guide of them is troubled: Now they are ſet on wrong Objects, they run at random, and are under no kind of Rule, and ſo they hurry the poor man, and put him in a pitiful caſe. Now indeed ſo it is with us, ſince ſin entered, the Soul is wholly turned off God, the only true Object of delight, in which only there can be ſolid gloriation. The mind of man is blinded, and his paſſions are ſtrong, and ſo they are now ſpent upon empty vanities, and carried headlong without judgement. Oftentimes he glories in that which is his ſhame, and boaſts in that which is his ſin, and which will cauſe nothing but ſhame, the more weight be laid upon it. There is in man an Oblivion and forgetfulneſſe of God, and in this darkneſſe of the ignorance of God, every thing is apprehended or miſapprehended as preſent ſenſe ſuggeſts, and as it fancies a conveniency or excellency, thither the Soul is carried as if it were ſomething, and then it is but the eaſt Wind; There is nothing beſide God that is a fit matter of boaſting, becauſe it laikes one of the Eſſential Ingredients; Either it is not ſuitable to the Soul, or it is not truely our own; There wants either proportion to the vaſt capacity and void of our deſires, and ſo cannot fill up that really, but only in a deluding dream or imagination, and therefore will certainly make the iſſue rather vexation then gloriation; Or

there wants property and intereſt in them; For they are changeable and periſhing in their own nature and by Divine appointment, that they cannot be conceived to be the proper Good of the immortal Soul; They cannot be truely our own, becauſe they will ſhortly ceaſe to be, and before they ceaſe to be, they may in a moment ceaſe to be ours; That tye of Intereſt is a draw-knot, whatſoever catcheth hold of the end of it, looſeth it.

The Object of degenerat and vitious boaſting is here held out; *Boaſt not thy ſelf, or of thy ſelf.* Whatſoever be the immediat matter of it, this is alwayes the ultimat and principal Object. Since man fell from God, ſelf is the center of all his affections and motions: This is the great Idol, *the Diana*, that the heart worſhips, and all the contention, labour, clamour, and care that is among men, is about her Silver Shrines, ſo to ſpeak, ſomething relating to the adorning or ſetting forth of this Idol. It is true, ſince the Heart is turned from that direct ſubordination to God, the Affections are ſcattered and parted into infinite Channels, and run towards innumerable Objects; for the want of that Original Unity, which comprehends in its boſom univerſal plenty, muſt needs breed infinite variety, to ſupply the inſatiable appetite of the Soul. And this might be enough to convince you, that your Souls are quite out of courſe, and altogether wandered from the way of Happineſſe, becauſe they are poured out on ſuch a multiplicity of unſufficient, unſatisfying

ing things, every one of which is narrow, limited and empty, and the combination and concurrance of all, being a thing either impossible or improbable to be attained. But we may conceive, that mens Affections part themselves into three great heads of created things: One of which, runs towards the Goods or Perfections of the Mind; Another towards the Goods or advantages of the Body; And a third towards those things that are without us, *bona fortunæ*, Riches and Honour, &c. Now each of these send out many Streames, and Rivulets as so many Branches from it; But all of them, though they seem to have a direct course towards other things, yet they wind about and make a circular progresse to the great Ocean of self estimation, whence they issued at first. You may find all of those, *Jer.* 9. 23. falling under a Divine Interdiction and Curse, as being opposite to glorying in God. While men reflect within themselves, and behold some Endowments and Abilities in their minds beyond other men, of which, Wisdom is the Principal, and here stands for all inward advantages or qualifications of the Soul; In that secret reflection and comparison, there is a tacite Gloriation, which yet is a loud blasphemy in Gods Eares. It is impossible almost for a man to recognosce and review his own Parts, such as Ingine, Memory, Understanding, Sharpnesse of Wit, Readinesse of Expression, Goodnesse and Gentlenesse of Nature; But that in such a review, the Soul must be puft up, apprehending some excellency beyond other men, and taking complacency in it,

which are the two Acts of Robery, that are in gloriation and boasting: Commonly this arises from unequal comparisons, we please our selves that we are *deteriorib us meliores*, better then the worst, and builds self-estimation upon the ruines of other mens disadvantages, as if it were any point of praise in us, that they are worse: like men that stand upon a height, and measure their own Altitude, not from their just intrinsick quantity, but taking the advantage of the bottom, whereby we deceive our own selves. I remember a word of *Solomons*, that imports how dangerous a thing it is for a man to reflect upon, or search into his own Glory, *Prov.* 25. 27. *It is not good to eat much honey: So for men to search their own glory, is not glory.* To surfet in the excesse of Honey or Sweet things, drives to vomite and cloyes the Stomach, *vers.* 16. Though it be sweet, there is great need, yea, the more need of Caution and Moderation about it; So for a man, either to search into his own breast, and reflect upon his own excellencies to find matter of Gloriation, or studiously to affect it among others, and enquire into other mens accompt, and esteem of him, it is no Glory, it is a dangerous and shamful Folly. Now this is not only incident to Natural Spirits upon their considerations of their own advantages; but even to the most gracious, upon the review of Spirituall Endowments and Prerogatives: It is such a subtil and insinuating Poyson, that it spreads universally, and infects the most Precious Oyntments of the Soul, and as it were Poysons the very Antidot and Coun-

terpoyſon ; So forcible is this that was firſt dropped into mans Nature by Satans envy, that it diffuſes it ſelf even into Humility and Humiliation it ſelf, and makes a man proud, becauſe of Humility. The Apoſtle found need to caveat this, *Rom.* 11. 18, 19, 20. *Boaſt not, be not high minded, but fear, thou ſtandeſt by faith.* And Chap. 12. 16. *Mind not high things, Be not wiſe in your own conceits.* And 1. Cor. 8. 2. *If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing as he ought to know.* All which, gives us a plain demonſtration of this, that ſelf-gloriation and complacency in reflection upon our ſelves, is both the greateſt Ignorance, and the worſt Sacriledge. It is an Argumeut of greater ignorance for a man to think he knows, then not to know indeed ; It is the worſt and moſt dangerous Ignorance, to have ſuch an opinion of our Knowledge, Gifts and Graces ; For that puffes up, ſwells with empty Wind, and makes a vain tumor : And then it is great Sacriledge, a robbing of the Honour that is due to God. *For what haſt thou that thou haſt not received.* That appropriating of theſe things to our ſelves as ours, is an impropriating of them from their right Owner, that is God, 1 *Cor.* 4. 7. For if thou did apprehend that thou receivedſt it, where then is glorying ? I would deſire then, that whenever you happen to reflect upon your ſelves, and obſerve any advantage either natural or ſpiritual in your ſelves, that you may think this word ſounds from Heaven, *Let him that gloriеth, glory in the Lord. Let not the wiſe man*

glory in his wiſdom ; And ſo not the Learned man in his Learning, nor the Eloquent man in his Speaking, nor the Ingenious man in his Quickneſſe, nor the Good man in his Goodneſſe : All theſe things though ſweet, yet will ſurfeit ; Gloriation in them is neither Glory, nor Gain, neither Honourable nor Profitable.

Then the Stream of Gloriation flows in the Channel of Bodily Gifts, as Might, Strength of Body, Beauty and Comlineſſe of Parts, and other ſuch Endowments ; which beſides that it is as Irrational as the former, in Sacrilegious Impropriation of the moſt free and Arbitrary Gifts of God to our ſelves ; It is withall abſurd, in that it is not ſo truely our ſelves : Theſe bodily Ornaments and Indowments do not perfite or better a man as a man. They are but the alterable qualities of the Veſſel or Tabernacle of a man, in which other baſer Creatures may far excell him. How many comely and beautiful Souls, are lodged within obſcure and ugly Cottages of Bodies of Clay, which will be taken down : And the great advantage is, that the Soul of a man, which is a man, cannot be defiled from without, that is, from the Body though never ſo loathſome or deformed : The vileſt Body cannot marre the Soules beauty ; But then on the other hand, the moſt beautiful Body is defiled and deformed, by the filthineſſe of ſin in the Soul : And O ! how many deformed and ugly Souls dwell into beautiful and comely Bodies, which truely is no other thing, then a Divel in an

Image

Image well carved and painted. Christians, you had need to correct this within you, even a self-complacency, joyned with despiseing of others in the consideration of these external Gifts God hath given you. What an abominable thing is it to cast up in reproach, or in your hearts to despise any other for natural Imperfections? Such as Blindnesse, Lameness, Deformity, or such like. Let that word sound alwayes in your Eares, *Who made thee to differ from another? Boast not thy self*, &c. But there is as strong a Stream runs in the third Channel, as in any; Gloriation arising from these outward and extrinsick differences, that the Providence of God makes among men, such as Riches, Honour, Gain, &c. You find such men, *Psal.* 49. 6. *Prov.* 18. 11. And 10. 15. That which a godly man makes the Name of the Lord, that is, the ground and foundation of his confidence for present and future times, that, the most part of men make their Riches; That is their strong City, and their high Wall, their Hope and Expectation is reposed within it. This is the Tower, or Wall of Defence against the Injuries and Calamities of the Times, which most part of men are building, and if it go up quickly, if they can get these several Stones or peeces of gain scraped together into a heap, they straight way imagine themselves safe, as under a high Wall; But there is no truth in it, it is all but in their imagination, and therefore it comes often down about their Eares, and offends them instead of being a Defence. Let a man creep, as

it were ; from of the ground where the poor lie, and get some advantage of ground above them , or be exalted to some Dignity or Office , and so set by the shoulders higher then the rest of the People , or yet grow in some more aboundance of the things of this life, and strange it is , what a vanity or tumour of mind instantly follows : He presently thinks himself some body , and forgeting either who is above him , to whom all are Worms creeping and crauling on the Foot-stool ; Or what a sandy Foundation he stands upon himself, He begins to take some secret complacency in himself , and to look down upon others below him ; He applauds, as it were , unto himself , and takes it in evil part to want the approbation and plaudite of others ; Then he cannot so well endure *effronts* and *injuries* as before ; He is not so Meek and condescending to his Equals or Inferiours : While he was poor , he used intreaties , but *now he answers roughly* , Pro. 18. 23. As *Solomon* gives the Character of him. How many vain and empty Gloriations are there about the point of Birth and Place , and what foolish contentions about those , as if it were Children struggling among themselves , about the order and rank ; There is no worth in these things, but what fancy and custom impose upon them, and yet poor Creatures boast in these empty things. The Gentle Men despise Citizens, the Citizens contemn the poor Countrey Men, and yet their Bloods in a Bason have no different Colours ; For all this hot contention about Blood and Birth. *Boast not of thy self.*

Nay,

Nay; to speak properly, this is not thy self. *Qui genus laudat suum, aliena jactat.* Such Parents, and such a House is nothing of thy own, these are meer extrinsick things, which neither be a honour to unworthy men, nor a disgrace to one who is worthy.

You see, Beloved in the Lord, what is now the natural posture or inclination of our Souls in this degenerat and fallen Estate, as the Rivers of Paradise have changed their Channels and Course since the fall, so hath mans Affections, and so hath his Gloriation, so that it may be truely said, that our Glory is our Shame, and not our Glory. Many glory in Iniquity and Sin, *Psal.* 10 3. And 94 4. But that shall undoubtedly be their shame, and confusion before Men and Angels. How many godless persons will Glory in swearing heinous and deep Oaths, and some have contended about the victory in it, you accompt it a point of gallentry, but this Triumph is like the Devils in Hell upon the devouring of Souls. Some boast of drinking, and being able to drink others under the Table: But we should be humbled and mourn for such Abominations. Certain I am, that many boast of wicked designs, and malitious projects against their Neighbours; If they can accomplish them; They accompt their Glory, not to take a wrong without giving a greater; Nor to suffer an evil word, without twenty worse in recompense. Alas, this Boasting will one day be turned into gnashing of Teeth, and this Gloriation into that gnawing and ever-tormenting Worm of Conscience. *And what will ye do in the day of that visitation,*

and where shall be your glory? But the most part Glory and boast in things that profit not, and will become their shame, because they glory in them, that is, these Gifts of God, outward or inward, Temporal or Spiritual, wherein there is any advancement above others; Unto whom, I would seriously commend this Sentence to be pondered duely, *Boast not of thy self.* Whatsoever thou art, or whatsoever thou hast, boast not of thy self for it, think not much of thy self because of it: Though there be a difference in Gods Donation, yet let there be none in thy self-estimation: Hath thou more Wisdome and Pregnancy of Wit, or more Learning then another; Think not more of thy self for that, then thou thinkest of the Ignorant and Unlearned who want it: Have that same reflection upon thine own unworthinesse, that thou would think reasonable another that wants these Endowments should have: Is there a greater measure of Grace in thee, boast not, reckon of thy self as abstracted and denuded of that: And let it not add to thy value or accompt it thy self, put not in that to make it down-weight, and to make thee prefer thy self secretly to another. Whither it be some larger Fortune in the World, or some higher Place and Station among Men, or some Abilities and Perfections of Body or Mind, which may intice the secretly to kisse thy hand, and bow down to thy self, yet remember that thou boast not, glory not in any thing but in the Lord: Let nothing of that kind conciliat more affection to thy self, or more contempt towards others. Let not any thing of that kind be the rule of thy self-judgeing,

ing, but rather intertain the view of the other fide of thy ſelf, that is the worſt, and keep that moſt in thy Eye, that thou may only glory in God. If thou be a Gentle Man, labour to be als humble in Heart, as thou thinkeſt a Countrey Man or poor Tenant ſhould be; If thou be a Scholar, be als low in thy own ſight, as the unlearned ſhould be; If Rich, count not thy ſelf any whit better then the poor. Yea, the higher God ſet the in place or parts, the lower thou ought to ſet thy ſelf: *Boaſt not of thy ſelf*, for any thing in thy ſelf, or belonging to thy ſelf, for the property of all Good is taken from us ſince the fall, and it is fallen in Gods Hand, ſince we forefeited it, and there is nothing now properly ours, but evil, that is our ſelf.

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SERMON VII.

Prov. 27. 1. *Boast not thy self of to morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.*

AS man is naturally given to Boasting and Gloriation in something (for the Heart cannot want some Object to rest upon and take complacency into, it is framed with such a capacity of employing other things) so there is a strong inclination in man towards the time to come, he hath an Immortal appetite, and an appetite of Immortality; and therefore his desires usually stretch farther then the present Hour. And the more Knowledge he hath above other Creatures, the more Providence he hath and foresight of the time to come. And so he often anticipats future things, by present Joy and Rejoycing in them, as he accelerats in a manner by his earnest desires and endeavours after them: Now if the Soul of man were in the Primitive Integrity, and had as clear and pearcing an Eye of Understanding as once it had, this Providence of the Soul would reach to the furthest period in Time; that is, to Eternity, which is the only just measure of the endurance of any Immortal Spirit. But since the Eye of mans Understanding is darknesse, and his Soul disordered, he cannot see afar off,

off, nor ſo clearly, by far : He is now as you ſay Sand-blind, can ſee nothing at ſuch a diſtance, as beyond the bounds of Time, can ſee nothing but at hand, *to morrow*, this is the narrow Sphere of poor mans comprehenſion; All he can attain unto, is to be provident for the preſent Time : I call it all preſent, even that which is to come of our Time; becauſe in regard of Eternity it hath no part, it hath no flux or ſucceſſion, it is ſo ſoon cut off as a moment, as the twinckling of an Eye : And ſo though a man could ſee the end of it, it is but a ſhort and dim ſight, it is as if a man could only behold that which is almoſt contiguous with his Eye. Theſe then are the two great ruines and decayes of the Nature of man; He is degenerated from God to created things, and ſeeks his Joy and Reſt in them, in which there is nothing but the contrair; that is, vexation. And then he is fallen from apprehenſion of Eternity, and the poor Soul is confined within the narrow bounds of time; So that now all his Providence, is to lay up ſome periſhing things for ſome few revolutions of the Sun, for ſome few morrows, after which, though an endleſſe morrow enſue, yet he perceives it not, and provides not for it; And all his Glorying and Boaſting is only upon ſome preſumptuous confidence, and ungrounded aſſurance of the ſtability of theſe things for the time to come; which the Wiſe Man finding much folly in, he leaves us this Counſel, *Boaſt not thy ſelf of to morrow*, with a moſt pungent reaſon, taken partly from the inſtability and inconſtancy of all theſe outward things

things, in which men fancy an Eternity of Joy; and partly from the Ignorance we have of the future events, *For thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.*

This Boasting is an evil so predominant among men, that I know not any more universal in its Dominion, or more hurtful to us, or displeasing to God. If it could be so embowelled unto you, as that you might truely discern the many monstrous conceptions of Atheism and Irreligion that are in it, it were worth the while. But I shall not digresse upon the general head, I had rather keep within the limits of the Text. Self-boasting you see, is that which is here condemned, and the very Name is almost enough to condemn the Nature of it. But there is another particular added to restrict that, *Of to morrow.* Of all Boastings the most irrational and groundlesse is that which arises from presumption of future things, which are so uncertain both in themselves and to us.

It is worth the observation, that whatever be the immediat and particular matter and occasion of mens Gloriation, yet *Self* is the great and ultimat Object of it: It is *Self* that men Glory into, whatsoever created thing be the reason or occasion of it. *Boast not thy self of to morrow.* Here we might stand and take a look of the crookednesse and perversnesse of mans Spirit, since his departure from God; Self-love and Pride were the first poyson that the malice of Satan dropped into mans Nature, and this is so strong and pestilent, that it hath spread through the whole of mankind, and the whole

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in every man. Every one is infected, and all in every one. What are all the disordered affections in men, but so many Streams from this Fountain? And from these do mens Affections flow next: So that there is nothing left uncorrupted, and free of this abominable and vile ingredient: All flowing from Self and returning to it again, which is both sacrilegious and unnatural. There is heinous Sacriledge in it, the spoyling of the Glorious Divine Majesty, of his Indubitable Prerogative and Incommunicable Right of all the Glory and Honour of his Creature: There is no usurpation like this, for the Worm that crawls on the Footstool, to creep up to the Throne, and as it were to King it there, to Deifie and Adore it self, and gather in all the Tribute of Praise and Glory and Love, that is only due to the Lord God Almighty, and invert and unpropriat these to our selves; which is, as if the Axe should boast it self, as if it were no Iron, or the Staff, as if it were no Timber. Hence it is, that of all evils in mans Nature, God hath the most perfect Antipathy, and direct Opposition against Pride and Self-love, because it is Sacriledge and Idolatry in the highest manner, it striks at the Soveraignty and Honour of Gods Name, which is dear to him as himself, it sets up a vile Idol in the choicest Temple of God, that is in the Heart: And this is the Abomination of Desolation: Other evils strike against his Holy Will: But this peculiarly points at the very Nature and Beeing of the most High God, and so it is with Child of Blasphemy, Atheism is the very

ry heart and life of it. And then it is most unnatural, and so monstrous and deformed. For consider all the Creation, though every one of them have particular Inclinations towards their own proper ends, and so a Happinesse suitable to their own Nature; yet how diverse, how contrary soever they be, there is no selfishnesse in them; They all concurre and conspire to the good of the whole, and the mutual help of each other. If once that Poyson should infect the Material World, which hath spoyled the Spiritual, let once such a selfish disposition or inclination possesse any part of the World, and presently the Order, Harmony, Beauty, Pleasure and Profite of the whole World should be Interrupted, Defaced and Destroyed. Let the Sun be supposed to boast it self of its Light and Influence, and so disdain to impart it to the lower World, and all would run into confusion. Again I desire you but to take a view of this Humour in anothers Person; (For we are more ready to see others evils then our own) and how deformed is it? So vile is self-seeking and self-boasting, that all men loath it in others, and hide it from others: It disgraces all Actions, how beautiful soever; It is the very bane of Humane Society, that which looses all the Linkes of it, and makes them crosse and thwart one another.

But, alas, how much more easie is it, to paint out such an evil in a deformed Visage, then to discern it in our selves? And how many will hate it in the Picture, who love and

nd entertain it in their own perſons, ſuch deeitfulneſſe is intermingled with moſt deſperat wickedneſſe. I verily believe that is the prominant of every man good and bad, except in as far as it is mortified by Grace. O! he turnings and windings of the Heart upon itſelf, in all the moſt apparently direct Motions towards God and the good of men? What ſerpentine and crooked Circumgyrations, and reflections are there in the Soul of man, when the outward Action and Expreſſion ſeems moſt regular, and directed towards Gods Glory and others Edification? Whoever of you have any acquaintance with your own Spirits, cannot but know this, and be aſhamed and confounded at the very thought of it. Self-boaſting; Self-complacency, Self-ſeeking, all thoſe being of Kin one to another, are inſinuated into your beſt Notions, and in fect them with more Atheiſm before God, then the ſtrongeſt pious Affection can inſtill of goodneſſe into them. How often will mens Actions and Expreſſions be outwardly cloathed with a habit of Condeſcendency and Self-denyal? And many may declaim with ſuch Zeal and Vehemency againſt this evil, and yet *Latet anguis:* The Serpent is in the boſome, and his venome may be diffuſed into the Heart, and the poyſon of Self-ſeeking and Self-boaſting, may run thorow the Veines of humblelike Carriage and Paſſionate Diſcourſes for Self-denyal. Oh that we could above all things, eſtabliſh that Fundamental Principle of Chriſtianity in our Hearts, even as we would be his Diſciples, truely and ſincerely,

ly, and not in outward reſemblance, to deſire our ſelves, to renounce our ſelves and oppoſe luſts, to make a whole Reſignation of our Love, Will, Glory and all to him, in whom to be loſt, it is only truely to find our ſelves.

But though man have this ſtrange Self-idolizing Humour, and a Self-glorying Diſpoſition, yet he is ſo poor and beggarly a Creature, that he hath not ſufficient matter within himſelf, to give complaceency to his Heart; therefore he muſt borrow from all external things; And when there is any kind of Propriety in, or Title to them, then he Glories in himſelf for them, as if they were truely in himſelf. We are Creatures by Nature moſt indigent, yet moſt proud, which is unnatural. No man is ſatisfied within himſelf (except the Good man, *Prov.* 14. 14.) but he goes abroad to ſeek it at the Door of every Creature; And when there are ſome Plumes or Feathers borrowed from other Birds, like that fooliſh Bird in the Fable, we begin to raiſe our Criſts and boaſt our ſelves, as if we had all theſe of our own, and were beholden to none. But as things that are truely our own, will not be ſufficient to feed this Flame of Gloriation, without the acceſſion of outward things: So preſent things and the preſent time will not afford Aliment enough or Fewel for this Humour, without the addition of the morrow.

Boaſt not thy ſelf of to morrow. No mans preſent poſſeſſion ſatisfies him, without the addition of hope and expectation for the future.

desire. And herein the poverty of mans Spirit appears, and the emptineſſe of all things we enjoy here, that our preſent Revenue, as it were, will not content the Heart: The preſent Poſſeſſion fills not up the Vacuities of the Heart, without the ſupply of our imaginations, by taking ſo much in upon the head of the morrow, to ſpeak ſo: As one Prodigal and Riotous Waſter, who cannot be ſerved with his yearly incomes, but takes ſo much on upon his Eſtate, upon the next years income, before it come, begines to ſpend upon it, before it come it ſelf, and then when it comes it cannot ſuffice it ſelt; So the inſatiable and indigent Heart of man cannot ſubſiſt and feed its Joy in Complacency upon the whole World, if it were preſently in its poſſeſſion, without ſome acceſſion of hopes and expectations for the time to come. Therefore the Soul, as it were, Anticipats and Foreſtals the morrow, and borrows ſo much preſent Joy and Boaſting upon the head of it, which when it comes it ſelf, perhaps it will not fill the hand of the Reaper, let be pay for that Debt of Gloriation that was taken on upon its name, or compenſe the expectation was in it. See *Job.* 11. 18, 20. *and* 8. 13. Hope is like a mans houſe to him, but to many it is no better then a Spidders Web, We have then a clear Demonſtration of the madneſſe and folly of men, who hang ſo much upon things without, and ſuffer themſelves to be Moulded and Modelled in their Affections, according to the variety of external Accidents; Frſt of all, conſider the independence of all things upon us and our choice, there

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is nothing more unreasonable, then to stirre o passions upon that which falls not under o deliberation, as the most part of things to com are. What shall be to morrow, what sha come of my Estate, of my places, what ever my Projects and Designes shall have, this not in my hand; These depends upon othe mens Wills, Purposes and Actions, which ar not in my power; And therefore, either to Boast or Glory upon that which depends upo the concurrance of so many Causes Unsubordi-nat to me, or to be vexed and disquieted upon the fore Apprehension of that which is not in my hand to prevent, it is not only Irreligious, as contrary to our Saviours Command, *Matth.* 6. But unreasonable also, as that which even Nature condemns: *Take not thought for to morrow*, and so by consequent, *Boast not of to morrow*. And there's one Argument from the vanity of such Affections, *Thou canst not make one hair black, nor add one cubit to thy stature*, &c. To what purpose then, are either these Vexations or Gloriations, which cannot prevent evil, nor procure good? Why should our Affections depend upon others Motions? This makes a man the greatest Slave and Captive, so that he hath not the Dominion and Power of himself. But the vanity of such Affections is the more increased, if we consider that Supreme Eternal Will, by which all these things are Determined; And therefore, it is in vain for Creatures to make themselves more miserable, or put themselves in a Fools Paradise, which will produce more misery afterwards, and that for

r theſe things, which are bound up in that fa-
l Chain of his eternal purpoſe. Then in the
ext place, the folly of men appears from the
conſtancy of theſe things; there is ſuch an
nfinite variety of the Accidents of Providence,
hat it is folly for a man to preſume to boaſt of
ny thing, or take Complacency in it, becauſe
many things fall between the Cup and the Lip,
he Chalice and the Chin as the proverb
s. There is nothing certain, but that all
things are uncertain, that all things are ſub-
ject to perpetual Motion, Revolution and
Change; To day a City; to morrow a
Heap. And there is nothing between a great
City and a Heap but one day; Nothing be-
tween a Man and no Man but one hour: Our
Life is ſubject to infinite Caſualities: It may
receive the Fatal Stroak from the meaneſt
thing, and moſt unexpected; it is a Buble
flotting upon the Water; For this World is
a wattery Element, in continual Motion with
Storms, and in theſe, ſo many poor dying
Creatures riſe up, and twime and float a while,
and are toſſed up and down by the Wind and
Vave, and the leaſt puff of Wind, or drop
of Rain ſends it back to its own Element:
We are a Vapour appearing for a very little
time, a Creature of no ſolidity, a Dream, a
Shadow and appearance of ſomething; And
this Dream, or Apparition is but for a little
time, and then it evaniſheth, not ſo much in-
to nothing, for it was little diſtant from no-
thing before, but it diſappears rather. All
humane Affairs are like the Spaiks of a Wheel,

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in such a continual Circumgyration, as a Captive King who was drawing *Sesostris* Chariot on said, when he was looking often behind him the King of Ægypt *Sesostris* demanded, for what end did he look so often about him; Say he, I am looking to the Wheel, musing upon the Vicissitudes and Permutations of it, how the highest parts are instantly lowest; And this word represst the Kings vain Glory. Now in this constant Wheeling of outward things which is the Soul, that enjoyes true quiet and peace? Even that Soul, that is fixed, as it were in the Center, upon God, that hath its abode in him: Though the parts without be in a continual violent Motion, yet the Center of the Wheel is at much peace, is not violently turned, but gently complyes to the changes of the other. And then consider the madness of this, *Thou knowest not*, &c. There are two Reasons in the things themselves, Inconstancy, and Independency on us; But this is als pressing as any, our ignorance of them: They are wholly in the dark to us, as it were, in the lower parts of the Earth. As there is no more in our power, but the present hour, for to yester-day we are dead already, for it is past and cannot return, it is as it were buried in the Grave of Oblivion: And to morrow, we are not yet born, for it is not come to the Light, and we know not if ever it will come; So there is no more in our knowledge, but the present hour. The time past, though we remember it, yet it is without our practical knowledge, it admits of no Reformation by it: And

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e time to come, it is not born to us, and its
l one as if we were not born to it. And in-
ed in the Lords disposing of all Affairs under
e Sun, after this Method, there is infinite
Wisdom and Goodnesse both, though at the
rst view, men would think it better, that all
hings went on after an uniform manner; And
hat men knew what were to befal them; Yet
say, God hath herein provided for his own
Glory and the Good of men: His own Glo-
y, while he hath reserved to himself, the ab-
olute Dominion, and perfect knowledge of his
Works, and exercises them in so great varie-
y, that they may be seen to proceed from him;
And for our good, for what place were there
for the exercise of many Christian Vertues and
Graces, if it were not so? What place for
Patience, if there were no crosse Dispensati-
ons? what place for Moderation, if there
were no Prosperity? If there were not such
Variety and Vicissitude, how should the even-
nesse and constancy of the Spirit be known?
Where should Contentment and Tranquillity
of Mind have place? For it is a Calme in a
Storm properly, not a Calm in a Calm, that is
no Vertue. If the several Accidents of Provi-
dence were foreseen by us, what a marvelous
Perturbation and disorder would it make in our
Duty? Who would do his Duty out of Con-
science to Gods Command, to commit Events
to him? Now there is the tryal of Obedi-
ence, *to make us go by a way we know not*, and
Resigne our selves to *All-seeing Providence, whose
Eyes run too and fro throughout the earth.* There-
fore,

fore, that no Grace may want matter and o th
casion of exercise, that no Vertue may die o rese
for want of Fewel, or rust for lack of Ex nov
cise, God hath thus Ordered and Disposed t art
World. There is no Condition, no Postu nd
of Affairs, in which he hath not left a fair O po.
portunity, for the exercising of some Grac ne
Hath he shut up and precluded the Acting in
one or many through Affliction, then surely ath
hath opened a wide Door, and given large
matter for Self denyal, Humility, Patienc er
Moderation; And these are als precious, n i
any that look fairest. In a word, I think the a
very Frame and Method of the disposing of th nc
Material World, speaks aloud to this pu us
pose. You see, when you look below, the d
is nothing seen but the outside of the Earth, th na
very Surface of it only appears, and there you Al
sight is terminated; But look above, and there at
is no termination, no bounding of the Sigh u
there are infinite spaces, all are Transparan u
and Clear without and within. Now what
may this represent unto us: One sayes, it
shews us that our Affections should be set upon h
things above, and not on things below, seein w
below there is nothing but an outward appear V
ance and Surface of things, the Glory an be
Beauty of the Earth is but skin deep; But o
Heavenly things are alike throughout, all Trans ct
parent, nothing to set bounds to the Affecti fo
ons, they are infinite, and you may enlarge in to
finitly towards them. I add this other Con a
fideration, that God hath made all things in w
Time, Dark and Opake, like the Earth: look li

to

nd o them, you ſee only the outſide of them, the
ie oreſent hour, and what is beyond it, you
Exnow no more then you ſee, the Bowels of the
ſed earth. But Eternity is both Tranſparent
oſtund Conſpicuous throughout, and infinite
: Opo. Therefore God hath made us blind to the
Gracne, that we ſhould not ſet our heart, nor ter-
ing ainat our eyes upon any thing here; But he
ely ath opened and ſpread Eternity before us in
large Scriptures, ſo that you may read and un-
iencerſtand your Fortune, your everlaſting Eſtate
s, n it. He hath ſhut up Temporal things and
k thealed them, and wills us to live implicitly,
f thind give him the Truſt of them without anxi-
puous foreſight; But Eternity he hath unvail-
cheed and opened unto us. Certain it is, that no
tman till he be fully poſſeſſed of God, who is an
youAll-ſufficient Good, *Pſal.* 4. Can find any
heratisfaction, in any preſent Enjoyment with-
ghout the addition of ſome hope for the fu-
rasure. Great things without it will not con-
vhatent; for what is it all to a man, if he have
, ito aſſurance for the time to come, and mean
pothings with it, will content: Great things
inwith little hope and expectation, fill with more
arVexation inſtead of Joy, and the greater they
anbe, this is the more increaſed. Again, mean and
Bulow things, with great hopes and large expe-
nſtations will give more ſatisfaction. There-
tifore, all mankind have a look toward the mor-
in-row, and labour to ſupply their preſent defects
n-and wants with hope or confidence of that. I
inwould exhort you who would indeed have ſo-
oklid matter of Gloriation, and would not be be-

fooled into a golden Dream of vain expectations of vain things, that ye would labour to fill up the Vacuities of present things, with the great Hope, the Hope of Salvation, which will be as an Helmet to keep your head safe in all difficulties, 1 *Pet.* 1. 3. *Heb.* 6. 18, 19. *Rom.* 5. 5. It is true, other mens expectations of Gain and Credit, and such things; Do in some measure, abait the torment and pain of present wants and indigencies: But certain it is, that such hope is not so Soveraign a Cordial to the heart, as to expell all grief, but leaves much vexation within: But then also, the frequent disappointment of such projects and designs of Gain, Honour and Pleasure, and the extreme unanswerableness of these to the Desires and Hopes of the Soul, even when attained, musts needs breed infinite more anxiety and vexation in the Spirit, then the hope of them could give of satisfaction; Yea, the more the expectation was, it cannot choose, but the greater shame and confusion must be. Therefore, if you would have your Souls truely established, and not hanging upon the morrow uncertainly, as the most part of men are, get to look beyond the morrow, unto that everlasting Day of Eternity, that hath no morrow after it; *And see what foundation you can lay up for that time to come*, as *Paul* bids *Timothy* counsel the Rich Men in the World, who thought their Riches and Revenues, their Offices and Dignities, a Foundation and Well-spring of Contentment to them and their Children, and are ready to say with that man in the Parable, *Soul*

take thy rest, thou hast enough laid up for many years. Charge them, (sayes he,) &c. 1 *Tim.* 6. 6, 17, 18, 19. O! a Charge worthy to be engraven on the Tables of our hearts; worthy to be written on the Ports of all Cities, and the Gates of all Palaces. You would all have a Foundation of lasting Joy, sayes he; But why seek you lasting Joy in fadeing things? And certain Joy in uncertain Riches, and solid Contentment in empty things, and not rather in the Living God, who is the inexhausted Spring of all Good things? Therefore, if you would truely boast of to Morrow, or sing a solide Requiem to your own hearts; There is another Treasure to be laid up in store against the time to come; The Time only worthy to be called Time, that is Eternity; And that is, study to do good, and be rich in good Works, in VVorks of Piety, of Mercy, of Equity, of Sobriety. This is a better Foundation for the Time to come; Or rather receive and embrace the Promise of eternal Life, made to such, that free and gracious promise of Life in the Gospel; And so you may supply all the wants and indigencies of your present enjoyments, with the precious hope of eternal Life which cannot make ashamed. But what is the way that the most part of men take to mitigate and sweeten their present hardships? Even like that of the fools in the Parable, *Luke* 12. They either have something laid up for many years, or else their projects and designes reach to many years: The truth is, they have more pleasure in the expectation

of ſuch things, nor in the real poſſeſſion, but that pleaſure is but imaginary either. How many thoughts and deſignes are continually turning in the heart of man, how to be rich how to get greater gain, or more credit: Men build Caſtles in the Air, and fancy to themſelves, as it were, new VVorlds of meer poſſible beings, and in ſuch an imployment of the heart, there is ſome poor deceiving of preſent ſorrows, but at length they recurre with greater violence. Every man makes *Romanſes* for himſelf, pretty fancies of his own Fortune, as if he had the diſpoſing of it himſelf; He ſits down, as it were, and writes an Almanack and Prognoſtication in his own ſecret thoughts, and deſignes his own Proſperity, Gain and Advantage, and Pleaſures or Joyes; And when we have thus ranked our Hopes and Expectations, then we begin to take complacency in them, and boaſt our ſelves in the confidence of them, as if there were not a Supream Lord who gives a Law to our Affairs, als immediatly, as to the VVinds and Raines.

Now that you may know the folly of this, Conſider the Reaſon which is ſubjoyned, *For thou knoweſt not what a day may bring forth.* There is a concurrence of inconſtancy in all things, and ignorance in us, which might be ſufficient to check our folly of confident and preſumptuous expectation from them, and gloriation in them: So that whether we look about us to the things themſelves, or within us to our ſelves, all things proclaim the folly and madneſſe

Howeſſe of that which the heart of man is ſet u-
nuallpon. And this double conſideration the A-
richpoſtle *James* oppoſes to the vain hopes and con-
Meſident undertakings of men, Chap. 4. 13. &c,
hem-Which place is a perfect Commentary upon
poſ-this Text: He brings in an inſtance of the re-
ofthesolutions and purpoſes of rich men, for the
eſentcompaſſing of Gain by Merchandiſe, whereby
eat-you may underſtand all the ſeveral deſignes and
for plots of men, that are contrived and ordered,
as and laid down in the hearts of men, either for
ſits more Gain, or more Glory, or more Pleaſure
ck and Eaſe. Now the Grand Evil that is here
ts, reproved, is not ſimply mens Care and Dili-
d- gence in uſeing Lawful means for their acco-
en modation in this life, or yet their Wiſe and Pru-
t- dent foreſight in ordering of their Affairs for at-
n taining that end, for both theſe are frequently
recommended and commended by the VViſe
Man, *Prov.* 6. 6. and 24. 27. But here is the
great Iniquity, that men in all theſe contrivings
and actings, carry themſelves as if they were
abſolute Independents, without conſideratio-
on of the Soveraign Univerſal Dominion of
God. No man almoſt reflects upon that Glo-
rious Being, which alone hath the Negative
and Definitive Sentence in all the Motions and
Affairs of the ſons of men, or conſiders, that it
is not in man that walks, to direct his paths,
that when all our thoughts and deſigns are Mar-
ſhalled and Ordered, and the compleateſt pre-
paration made for reaching our intended ends,
that yet the way of man is not in himſelf;
That all theſe things are under a higher and

more abſolute Dominion of the moſt High God. VVhoſe heart doth that often ſound unto? *A mans heart deviſeth his way, but the Lord directs his ſteps*: And ſo is not bound by any rule to conform his Executions to our Intentions; For he works all according to the Counſel of his own VVill and not ours; And therefore no wonder that the product of our Actions do not anſwer our intentions and devices, becauſe the Supream Rule and Meaſure of them is above our Power and without our Knowledge. And therefore, though there were never ſo many devices in the heart of man. never ſo wiſely or lawfully Contrived and Ordered; Though the Mine be never ſo well prepared, and all ready for the fireing of it: *Yet the Counſel of the Lord, that ſhall ſtand, Prov.* 19. 21. & 16, 9. That higher determination may blow up our beſt conſultations or drown them, for mans goings is of the Lord, how then can a man underſtand his Paths, *Prov.* 20.24. And yet the moſt part of men in all theſe things loſſe the remembrance of this fatal and invincible Subordination to God, and propoſe their own Affairs and Actions, as if themſelves were to diſpoſe of them; And when their own reſolutions and projects ſeem probable, they begin to pleaſe themſelves in them, in the fore-thought of what they will do, or what they may have or enjoy to morrow afterward: There is a preſent ſecret Complacency and Gloriation, without any ſerious reminding the abſolute dependence of all things upon the VVill of God, and their independence upon our Counſels, with-

without fore-casting and often ruminating upon the perpetual fluctuation and constant inconstancy of humane Affairs, but as if we were the Supream Moderators in Heaven and Earth, so we Act and Transact our own businesse in a deep forgetfulnesse of him who sits in Heaven and laughs at all our Projects and Practices. And therefore, the Holy Ghost would have this secret but serious thought to season all our other Purposes and Consultations, *If the Lord will*, &c. Whereas we ought to say and think this, it is scarce minded: And then we know not what shal be to Morrow, for our Life it self is a Vapour. Herein is a strong Argument, you lay your designes for to Morrow, for a Year, for many Years, and yet ye know not, if ye shall be to Morrow. How many mens Projects are cast beyond that time that is measured out in Gods Counsel: And what a ridiculous thing must that be to him, if it be not done with submissive and humble dependence on him. In a word, Time is with Child of innumerable things, conceived by the Eternal Counsel of God; Infinite and inconceiveably Various are these Conceptions which the Womb of Time shall at length bring forth to Light; Every Day, every Hour, every Minute is travelling in pain, as it were, and is delivered of some one Birth or another, and no Creature can open its Womb sooner, or shut it longer then the appointed and prefixed Season; There is no miscarying as to him whose Decrees do properly conceive them, though to us they seem often Abortive. Now joyn unto this to make

the Alluſion full, as long as they are carried in the Womb of Time, they are hid from all the World; The Womb is a dark Lodging, and no Underſtanding nor Eye can pierce into it, to tell what is in it, till it break forth; And therefore, Children born are ſaid to come to the Light: for till then, they are to us in a Cloud of darkneſſe, that we cannot tell what they are; So then; every Day, every Hour, every Moment is about to bring forth that which all the World is ignorant of, till they ſee it; And Oh that then they underſtood it. We know not whether the Morrows or next Hours Birth may be a proportioned Child, or a Monſter, whether it will anſwer the Figure and Mould that is in our mind, or be miſhapen and deformed to our Senſe. Mans deſires and deſignes may be ſaid to conceive, for they form an inward Image and Idea within themſelves, to which they labour to make the Product and Birth of Time conformable; And when it anſwers our preconceived form, then we rejoyce as for a Man-child. But for the moſt part it is a Monſter as to our Conception, it is an Aberration from our Rule; It is either mutilate and defective of what we deſire, or ſuperfluous or deformed, which turns our expectation into vexation, and our boaſting into lamentation. But the truth is, Time brings forth no Monſters as to the Lords Decrees, which are the only juſt meaſures of all things: It may be ſaid of every thing under the Sun, as *David*

vid ſpeaks of himſelf in the Womb; *My ſubſtance was not hid from thee, when I was made in ſecret and curiouſly formed in the loweſt parts of the Earth*, &c. *Pſal.* 139. 15. His Eyes ſee all their ſubſtance: Yet being imperfect and in his everlaſting Book all their Members are written; The Portraicture of every thing is drawn there to the Life, and theſe in continuance are faſhioned, juſt as they were written and drawn, and ſo they exactly correſpond to his pre-conception of them, whatever deformity they may have as to us, yet they are perfect Works and beautiful to him.

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SERMON VIII.

Isaiah 1. 10, 11. &c. *Hear the Word of the Lord ye Rulers of Sodom, give ear unto the Word of the Lord ye People of Gomorrah.*

IT is strange to think what Mercy is mixed with the most Wrath-like Strokes and Threatnings; There is no Prophet whose Office and Commission is only for Judgment: Nay to speak the truth, it is Mercy that premises Threatnings. The entering of the Law both in the Commands and Curses, is to make sin abound that Grace may superabound; So that both Rods and Threatnings are the Messengers of Jesus Christ to bring sinners to him for Salvation: Every thing should be measured and named by its end; So, call Threatnings Promises, call Rods and Judgements Mercies; Name all good, and good to you, if so be ye understand the purpose of God in these. The shortest Preaching in the Bible useth to expresse it self what it means, though it be never so terrible. This is a sad and lamentable beginning of a Prophets Ministery: The first word is *to the Heavens and to the Earth.* A weighty and horrible regrate of this People, as if none of them were to hear, as if the Earth could be more

more easily affected then they. The Creatures are taken witnesses by God of their ingratitude, and then who shall speak for them: If Heaven and Earth be against them, who shall speak good of them? Will their own Conscience? No certainly, it will in the day of Witnessing and Judging precipitate its sentence, and spare the Judge the labour of probation; A mans enemy shall be within his own house, though now your Consciences agree with you: Nay, why doth the Lord speak to them? Because the People consider not, because Consciences have given over speaking to them; Therefore the Lord directs his Word to the dumb Earth: Yet how gracious is he, as to direct a second word even to the People, though a sad word. It is a complaint of iniquity and backsliding, and such as cannot be uttered: Yet it is Mercy to challenge them, yea, to chasten them. If the Lord would threaten a man with pure and unmixed Judgements, if he would frame a threatning of a Rod of pure Justice, I think it should be this, I will no more reprove thee, nor chasten thee; And he is not far from it, when he sayes, why shall ye be stricken any more, *&c. vers.* 5. As if he would say, it is in vain now to send a Rod, ye receive no correction; I sent the Rod that it might open your hearts and eares to the Word, and seal your instruction, but to what purpose is it? Ye grow worse and worse: Well, the Prophet campares here Sin and Judgement, and the one far surmounts the other: Ye would think a desolate Countrey, burnt Cities, Desolation made by Strangers, a sufficient recompense

penſe of their corruption and miſorders, of their forſaking and backſliding. Ye would think now, if your preſent condition and the Lands preſſed you to utter *Jeremiahs* Lamentation, a ſadder then which is not almoſt imaginable, ye would think I ſay, that you had received double for all your ſins: And yet alas, how are your iniquities of infinite more deſert: All that were Mercy, which is behind infinite and eternal puniſhment: that there is room left for complaint, it is Mercy: that there is a remnant left, it is Mercy.

Now to proclaim unto this People and to convince them that their Judgement was not ſevere; He gives them one word from God. And indeed it is ſtrange, that when the Rod is ſent, becauſe of the deſpiſing of the Word, that after the deſpiſing of both Word and Rod, another word ſhould come. Alwayes this word is a Convincing Word, a Directing Word, and a Comforting Word; Theſe uſe to be conjoyned, and if they be not alwayes expreſſed, we may lawfully underſtand them: We may joyn a Conſolation to a Conviction, and cloſe a Threatning with a Promiſe, if we take with a Threatning: *Jonahs* Preaching expreſſed no more but a Threatning and Denounciation of Judgement, but the people underſtood it according to Gods meaning, and made it a Rule of Direction, and ſo a ground of Conſolation. How inexcuſeable are we who have all theſe expreſſed unto us and often inculcated, *line upon line, and precept upon precept*, and yet ſo often divides the Word of Truth, or neglects it altogether. Moſt part fancy a belief of the pro-

Promiſes, and neither conſider Threatnings nor Commands: Some believing the Threatnings, are not ſo wiſe for their own Salvation, as to conſider what God ſayes more, but takes it for his laſt word. Shall not *Niniveh* riſe up in Judgement againſt this Generation; They repented at one Preaching, and that a ſhort one, and in appearance very defective: And yet we have many Preachings of the Son of God, and his Apoſtles in this Bible, both Law and Goſpel holden forth diſtinctly, and theſe ſpoken dayly in our audience, and yet we repent not.

This is a ſtrange Preface going before this Preaching, and more ſtrange in that it is before the firſt Preaching of a young Prophet, He ſpeakes both to Rulers and People, but he gives them a name, ſuch as certainly they would not take to themſelves, but ſeing he is to ſpeak the Word of the Lord, he muſt not flatter them, as they did themſelves. Is not this the Lords people, his Portion and Inheritance which he choſe out of the Nations? Are not theſe Rulers the Princes of *Judah* and the Lords Anoynted? Were they not both in Covenant with God, and ſeparated from the Nations both in Priviledges and Profeſſion? How then are they *Rulers of Sodom, and People of Gomorrah*? Likned to the worſt of the Nations; And not likened to them, but ſpoken off, as if they were indeed all one. When ye hear the Preface, ye would think that the Prophet were about to direct his ſpeech to *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*: But when ye look upon the Preaching, ye find he means by *Judah* and *Jeruſalem*, and theſe are

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the Rulers and People he ſpeaks of. Certainly according as men walk, ſo ſhall they be named and ranked; External priviledges and profeſſion may give a Name before men, and ſeparate men from men before the World; But they give no Name, make no difference before God, if all other things be not ſuitable to theſe. *He is not a Jew, (ſaith Paul) who is not one inwardly, but he who hath that Circumciſion in the heart, in the Spirit and not in the Letter.* Outward profeſſion and ſigns may have praiſe of men, but it is this that hath praiſe of God, *Rom.* 2. 28, 29. *Circumciſion and uncircumciſion, baptiſme or unbaptiſme availeth nothing but a new creature.* A baptized Chriſtian and an unbaptized Turk are alike before God, if their hearts and wayes be one, *Gal.* 6. 15. All Chriſtians profeſſe Faith, and glory in Baptiſme, but it avails nothing except *it work by love*, Gal. 5. 6.

Now what Name ſhall we give you? How ſhall our Rulers be called? How ſhall ye the People be called? If we ſhall ſpeak the truth, we fear it inſtruct you not, but irritate you; Yet the truth we muſt ſpeak, whether ye chuſe, or whether ye refuſe. Ye would all be called Chriſtians, the people of God: But we may not call you ſo, except we would flatter you, and deceive you by flattering, and murder you by deceiving. We would gladly Name you Chriſtians in the Spirit, Saints choſen and precious. Oh that we might ſpeak ſo to Rulers and people: But alas, we may not call you ſo, except ye were ſo indeed: We may not call you Chriſtians, leaſt ye believe

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your ſelves to be ſo : And yet alas, ye will think your ſelves ſuch, ſpeak what we can : Would ye know your Name then ? I perceive you liſten to hear what it is. But underſtand that it is your Name before God, which bears his accompt of you : What matter of a Name among men ? It is often a ſhadow without ſubſtance, a Name without the thing. If God Name you otherwayes, you ſhall have little either Honour or Comfort in it : When men bleſſe you and praiſe you, if the Lord reckon the among the beaſts that periſh, are ye honoured indeed ? Well then, hear your Name before God, what accompt hath he of you ? Ye Rulers, are Rulers of *Sodom*, and ye people, are people of *Gomorrah*. And if ye think this a hard ſaying, I deſire you will notice the way that the Prophet *Iſaiah* takes to prove his challenge againſt them, and the ſame may be alledged againſt Rulers and people now. VVe need no proof but one of both. See Verſ. 23. Thy Princes are rebellious, becauſe, though they hear much againſt their ſins, yet they never amend them, they pull away the ſhoulder : If they hear, yet they harden their heart. Is there any of them hath ſet too to pray in their Families, though earneſtly preſſed ? VVell, what follows ? *Every one loves Gifts.* Covetouſneſſe then and Oppreſſion proves Rulers to be Rulers of *Sodom*. *Shall their houſes ſtand, Shalt thou reign, becauſe thou cloſeſt thy ſelf with cedar*, Jer. 22. 15. No certainly, men ſhall one day take up a proverb againſt them, woe to him that encreaſes that which is not his, and loadeth himſelf with thick clay, they ſhall be for booties to the Lords

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ſpoylers, *Hab.* 2. 6. VVoe to them, for they have conſulted ſhame to their houſes, and ſinned againſt their own Soul. Their deſigne is to eſtabliſh their Houſe, and make it Eminent, but they take a compendious way to ſhame and ruine it. Alas it is too publick that Rulers ſeek their own things, for themſelves and their freinds: And for Jeſus and his Intereſts, they are not concerned? But are ye the people any whit better? Oh that it were ſo. But alas, when ye are involved in the ſame guiltineſſe, I fear ye partake of their plagues. VVhat are ye then? *People of Gomorrah.* Is not the Name of God blaſphemed dayly becauſe of you? Are not the abominations of the Gentiles the common diſeaſe of the multitude, and the very reproach of Chriſtianity. Set apart your publick ſervices and profeſſions, and is there any thing behind in your Converſation, but Drunkenneſſe, Lying, Swearing, Contention, Envy, Deceit, VVrath, Covetouſneſſe, and ſuch like? Have not the multitude of them been als civil, and carried themſelves als blameleſly, and without Offence, as the throng of our Viſible Church? What have ye more then they? It is true, ye are caled Chriſtians and ye boaſt in it. Ye know his will, and can ſpeak of points of Religion, can Teach and Inſtruct others, and ſo hath, as it were, in your minds a form and method of Knowledge, the beſt of you are but ſuch: But I ask, as *Paul* did the Jews in ſuch a caſe, *Thou that teacheſt another teacheſt thou not thy ſelf, thou that makeſt a boaſt of the Law, throw breaking of it, diſhoureſt thou God*, Rom. 2. 17. &c. 23. Why

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then, certainly all thy profeſſion and baptiſm avails nothing, and will never extract the from the Pagans, with whom thou art one in Converſation; Thy profeſſion is ſo far from helping thee in ſuch a caſe, that it ſhall be the moſt bitter ingredient in thy Cup of Judgment, for it is the greateſt Aggravation of thy ſin, for through it, Gods Name is Blaſpheemed; *If they had not known, they had not had ſin.* Pagans ſin is no ſin in reſpect of Chriſtians: If ye conſider Chriſts Sermon, *Matth.* 11. Ye will ſay, *Iſaiah* is a meak and moderate man in regard of him; *Iſaiah* calls them people of *Gomorrah*, but Chriſt will have them worſe, and their Judgment more intolerable then theirs. And that not only the profane of them, but the civil and Religious like, who believed not in him: VVell then, here is the advantage ye get of your Name of Chriſtianity, of your priviledge of hearing his VVord dayly; Ye who never ponder it, to tremble at it, or to rejoyce in it, who cannot be moved either to joy or grief for Spiritual things; Neither Law nor Goſpel moves the moſt part of you; I ſay here is all your gain, ye ſhall receive a reward with Gentiles and Pagans; Yea, ye ſhall be in a worſe caſe nor they in the Day of the Lord. The civil Chriſtian ſhall be worſe then the profane Turke, and ye ſhall not then boaſt that ye were Chriſtians, but ſhall deſire that ye had dwelt in the place where the Goſpel had never been preached: It is a Character of the Nations, *that they call not on God*, and of Heathen Families, *that they pray not to him*, Jer. 10.

10. 25. And wrath must be poured on them. VVhat then are the most part of you? Ye neither bow a Knee in secret, nor in your Families to God, your time is otherwayes employed, ye have no leisure to pray twice or thrice a day alone, except when ye put on your Cloathes ye utter some ordinary b:blings; Ye cannot be driven to Family worship, shall not God rank you in Judgement with these Heathen Families? Or shall it not be more tolerable for them nor for you? And are not the most part of you, every one given to Covetousnesse, your heart and eye after it, seeking Gain and Advantage more then the Kingdome of Heaven? Doth not every one of you, as you have power in your hand, oppresse one another? wrong one another? Now our end in speaking thus to you, is not to drive you to desparation: No indeed, but as there was a word of the Lord sent to such by *Isaiah*, so we bring a word unto you. That which ruines you, is your carnal confidence; Ye are presumptuous as this people, and cryes, *the Temple of the Lord*, the VVork of the Lord, &c. as if these would save you: Know therefore that all these will never cover you in the day of wrath; Know there is a necessity to make peace with God, and your righteousnesse must exceed the righteousnesse of a profession and external priviledges and duties, or else ye shall be as far from the Kingdome of Heaven, as *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*. VVe speak of Rulers sins, that ye may mourn for them, lest ye be Judged with them; If ye do not mourn

mourn for them in ſecret; know that they are your ſins; Ye are Companions with them: Many fret, grudge, and cry out againſt Oppreſſion, but who weeps in ſecret? Who prayes and deprecats Gods wrath, leaſt it come upon them? And while it is ſo: The Oppreſſion of Rulelers, becomes the ſin of the oppreſſed themſelves.

Hear the Word of the Lord] It were a ſuitable preparation for any Word that is ſpoken, to make it take impreſſion, if it were looked on *as the Word of the Lord* and *Law of our God.* And truely no man can hear aright, unleſſe he hear it ſo. Why doth not this Word of the Lord return with more Fruit? Why doth not men tremble or rejoyce at it? Certainly becauſe it is not received as Gods *Word*: There is a practical Hereſie in our hearts, which rather may be called Atheiſm; VVe do not believe the Scriptures. I do not ſay, men call it in queſtion, but I ſay, ye believe them not. It is one thing to believe with the heart, another thing not to doubt of it: Ye doubt not of it, not becauſe ye do indeed believe it, but becauſe ye do not at all conſider it. It is one thing to confeſſe with the Mouth, and another thing to believe with the Heart; For ye confeſſe the Scriptures to be Gods VVord, not becauſe ye believe them, but becauſe ye have received ſuch a Tradition from your Fathers, have heard it from the womb unqueſtioned. Oh

that

that this were engraven on your Heart, that these Commands, these Curses, these Promises are Divine Truthes, the VVords and the Oath of the Holy One. If every word of Truth came stamped with his Authority, and were received in the Name of God himself, what influence would it have on the Spirits and the practices of men; This would be a great Reformer, would Reform more in a Moneth, then Church and State hath done these many Years. VVhy are Rulers and People not Converted and Healed for all that is spoken? Here it is, *Who believes our report*: VVho believes that our report is thy own Testimony, O Lord? When Ministers threaten you in Gods Name, if his Authority were stamped on the Threatning, if men did seriously apprehend it were Gods own Voice, would they not tremble? When the Gospel and the joyful Sound comes forth, if ye apprehended that same Authority upon it, which ye who are Convinced, believes in the Law, would ye not be comforted? Finally, I may say, it is this point of Atheisme, of Inconsideration and Brutishnesse that destroys the multitude, makes all M ans Ineffectual to them, and retards the progresse of Christians. Men do not consider that this word is the word of the Eternal and True and Faithful God, and that not one Jot of it will faill. Here is a Poynt of Reformation I would put you to; If ye mind indeed to Reform, let this enter into your Hearts

Hearts and ſink down, that the Law and Goſpel is the Word of God, and reſolve to come and hear Preachings ſo, as the Voice *of Jeſus Chriſt the true and faithful witneſſe*: If ye do not take it ſo now, yet God will Judge you ſo at the end. *He that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me, and he that hears not you, hearer not me.* If ye thought ye had to do with God every Sabbath, would ye come ſo careleſly, and be ſo ſtupid and inconſiderate before the Judge of all the Earth: But ye will find in the end, that it was God whom ye knew not.

SER-

SERMON IX.

Isai. 1. 11. *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me, saith the Lord?* &c.

THis is the Word he calls them to hear, and a strange Word. *Isaiah* asks, what means your sacrifices? God will not have them. *I* think the people would say in their own hearts, what means the Prophet? What would the Lord be at? Do we any thing but what he Commanded us? Is he angry at us for Obeying him? What means this Word? Is he not repealing the Statute and Ordinance he had made in *Israel*? If he had reproved us for breach of Commands, for Omission and Neglect of Sacrifices, we would have taken with it; But what means this reproof for well doing? The Lord is a hard Master, if we neglect Sacrifices, and offer up the worst of the Flock, he is angry; If we have a care of them, and offer them punctually, and keep appoynted days precisely, he is angry: what shall we do to please him? I think many of you are put to as great a Non-plus, when your prayers and repentance and fasting is quarreled: Do ye not say in your hearts, we know not what to do, Ministers are angry at us if we pray not, and our pray-

praying they cry out againſt; They command us to Repent and Faſt, and yet ſay, that God will abhore both theſe. This is a Myſtery, and we ſhall endeavour to unfold it to you from the Word. It concerns us to know how God is pleaſed with our publick Services and Faſtings: For the moſt part of people have no more Religion. Ye all, I know, deſire to know what True Religion is: Conſult the Scriptures and ſearch them, for there ye ſhall find Eternal Life. We frame to our ſelf a wrong Pattern and Coppy of it, and ſo we judge our ſelves wrong. Our narrow Spirits do not take in the Latitude of the Scriptures Religion, but taking in one part, it excludes another, and thinks God rigid if it be not taken of our hand ſo. But I pray conſider theſe three things, which ſeem to make up the good Old Way, the Religion of the Old and New Teſtament. Firſt, Religion takes in all the Commands, it is univerſal, *hath reſpect to all the Commandments*, Pſal. 119. 6. It carries the two Tables in both hands, the firſt Table in the right hand, and the ſecond in the left. Theſe are ſo intirely conjoyned, that if ye receive not both, ye cannot receive any truely. Secondly, it takes in all the man, his Soul and Spirit als well as his Body: Nay, it principally includes that which is principal in the man, *his Soul and Spirit*, *his Mind and Affections*. If ye divide theſe, ye have not a man preſent but a body; And what fellowſhip can bodies have with him who is a Spirit: If ye divide theſe among themſelves, ye have not a Spirit indeed preſent; If the mind be not preſent,

sent, surely the heart cannot, but if the mind be, and the heart away, Religion is not Religion, but some empty Speculation; The mind cannot serve but by the heart: Where the heart is, there a man is reckoned to be. Thirdly, it takes in Jesus Christ as all, and excludes altogether a mans self. *He worships God in the Spirit*, but he rejoyces not in himself and in his spirit, *but in Jesus Christ*, *and hath no confidence in himself or the flesh* phil. 3. 3, 8. It includes the Soul and Spirit, and all the Commands, but it denyes them all, and embraces Jesus Christ by Faith, as the only Object of glorying into, and trusting into. All a mans self becomes dross in this Consideration. Now the first of these is drawn from the last, therefore it appears first; I say, an indeavour in walking in every thing Commanded, of conforming our way to the present rule and patern, is a stream flowing from the pure heart within: A mans Soul and Affections must once be purified, or it send out such Streams in Conversation. And from whence doth that pure heart come? Is it the Fountain and Original? No certainly; *The heart is desperately wicked above all things*, and how will it cleanse it self? But this purity proceeds from another Fountain, from Faith in Jesus Christ: And it is this, that lies neerest the uncreated Fountain Christ himself, it is the most immediat Conduit, the Mouth of the Fountain, or the Bucket to draw out of the deep Wells of Salvation: All these are conjoyned in this order, 1 *Tim.* 1. 5. *The end of the Command is love*, Ye know Love is said elsewhere to be the fulfilling

ling of the Law : And when we say Love, we mean all Duties to God and man, which Love ought immediatly to principle. Now this Love proceeds from a pure Heart, cleansed and sanctified, which pure heart proceeds from Faith unfeigned. So then, we must go up in our searching from external obedience all alongs, till we arrive at the inward Fountain of Christ dwelling in us by Faith :. And then have ye found true Religion indeed. Now ye may think possibly, we have used too much circumlocution ; What is all this to the present purpose ? Yes very much. Ye shall find the Lord rejecting this peoples publick Worship and solemn Ordinances, upon these three grounds, either they did not joyn with them the observation of weightier Commands, or they did not worship him in them with their Spirits, had not Souls present, or they knew not the end and use for which God had appoynted these Sacrifices and Ceremonies, they did not see to the end of all, which was Jesus Christ.

First then, I say, the people was much in external Sacrifices and Ceremonies, Commanded of God, but they were ignorant of the end of his Commands and of the use of them : Ye know in themselves they had no goodness, but only in relation to such an end as he pleased they should lead to : But they stayed upon the Ceremony and shadow, and were not led to use it as a means for such an end ; And so though they fancied that they obeyed, and pleased God, yet really they wholly perverted his meaning

and intention in the Command : Therefore doth the Lord plead with them in this place for their Sacrificeing , as if it had been Murther. They used to object his Commands. What, sayes the Lord , did I command these things ? Who required them ? Meaning certainly, who required them for such an end , to take away your sin ; who required them but as a shadow of the substance to come ? Who required them but as signes of that Lamb and Sacrifice to be offered up in the fullnesse of time ? And for asmuch as ye passe over all these , and think to please me with the external Ceremony, was that ever my intent or meaning ? Certainly ye have fancied a new Law of your own , I never gave such a Law. Therefore it is said, *Psal.* 50. 13. God pleads just after this manner, *Will I eat the flesh of Bulls , or drink the blood of Goats* ? &c. And *Micah* 6. 7. *Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rammes , or with ten thousands of rivers of oyl* ? He who hath no pleasure in sinful men , what pleasure can he have in beasts ? Therefore , it was to signify to them (who thought God would be pleased with them for their offering,) that he could not endure them, it was worse to him to offer him such a recompense , then if they had done none at all ; He is only well pleased in his well beloved Son ; And when they separat a Lamb or a Bullock from the well beloved, what was it to him more *nor a dogs neck or swines flesh* ? It was his Creature as these are, and no more, *Isai.* 66. 3. Now that they looked never beyond the Ceremonies, it is evident, because they boasted in them, they

used

uſed to find out theſe as a remedy of their ſins, and a mean to pacifie Gods Wrath, *Micah* 6. 6. *Paul* bears witneſſe of it, 2 *Cor.* 13. 14. *Moſes* had a Vail of Ceremonies over his Face, and the Children of *Iſrael* could not ſtedfaſtly look to the end of that Myſtery Chriſt Jeſus, but their minds were blinded, and is ſo to this day in the reading of the Scriptures: And this Vail of hardneſs of heart ſhall be done away when Chriſt returnes them again. Now I ſay it is juſt ſo with us, there was never a people liker other, nor we are like the Jews: We have many external Ordinances, Preaching, Hearing, Baptiſm, Communion, Reading, Singing, Praying in publick, Extraordinary Solemnities of Faſting and Thankſgiving, Works of Diſcipline and Government, publick Reproof to ſinners, Confeſſions and Abſolutions. What would ye think if we ſhould change the terms of Sacrifices and new Moons, and ſpeak all this to you? To what purpoſe is the multitude of your Faſts and Feaſts, of your Preachings and Communions, of your Praying in ſecret, and in your Families, of Conference and Prayer with others, of running to and fro to hear Preaching, to partake of the Lords Table? I am full of them, I delight not in them; When ye come here on the Sabbath, who required at your hand to tread my Courts? Come no more to hear the Word, run no more after Communions, ſeek no more Baptiſm to your Children, call no more Solemn Aſſemblies, it is all iniquity. Oh ſay ye, that is a ſtrange Preaching indeed, muſt we Pray no more? Hear no more? Sing no

more? Did not God command these; Why do ye discharge them? We do not mean so, that these should not be, but they should be in another way: All these want the Soul and Life of them, which is Jesus Christ in them. Do ye not think your selves religious, because ye frequent these? The multitude of the people think that these please God and pacifie his Wrath: Ye have no other thing in your mind but these. If ye can attain any sorrow or grief for sin, or any tears to signify it, presently you absolve your selves for your repentance; The scandalous who appear in publick, thinks the paying of a penalty to the Judge, and bowing the knee before the Congregation, satisfies God. Ye miss nothing when ye have these: I speak to the professors of Religion also, who pretend to more knowledge then others, when ye have gone about so many Duties, ye are well satisfied, if ye get liberty in them; If ye can satisfy your self, ye doubt not of Gods satisfaction; And if ye do not satisfy your selves in your Duties, ye cannot believe his satisfaction; Ye get the Ordinance, and misses nothing. Now, I say, in all this ye do not reach to the end of this Ministry *Jesus Christ*, ye do not stedfastly behold him, to empty your selves in his bosom, to turn over all the unrighteousnes of your holy things upon him who bears it; That which pleaseth you, is not *he in whom the Father is well pleased*, but the measure of your own Duty. O! the Establishing of our own Righteousnes is the ruine of the Visible Church: This is the grand Idol, and all Sacri-

crifice to it. Know therefore, that the moſt part of your performances are abomination and iniquity, becauſe ye have ſo much confidence in them, and puts them not upon Chriſt as filthy raggs, or do not cover them with his Righteouſneſs, as well as your wickedneſs. I know ye will ſay, that ye are not ſatisfied with them, and that is ſtill the matter of your Exerciſe. Well, I affirm in the Lords Name from that ground, that ye have confidence in them, for if your diffidence and diſquietneſs ariſe from it, your confidence and peace muſt come from it alſo. Is there any almoſt that maintains Faith, except when their own conditions pleaſe them well; And that Faith I may call no Faith, at leaſt not pure and cleanly entire Faith. As for the multitude of you, you muſt know this, that God is not pleaſed with your prayers and faſting and hearing, &c. Becauſe ye have ſuch an eſteem of them, becauſe ye can ſettle your ſelves againſt all Threatnings, and never once remember of Jeſus Chriſt, or conſider the end of his coming into the world: Becauſe ye find no neceſſity of pardon for your prayers and righteouſneſs, but ſtretches the garment of theſe over the uncleanneſs of your practices; What delight hath the Lord in them, when they are put in his Sons place? Will he not be jealous that his Sons Glory be not given to another?

In the ſecond place, the Lord rejects their performances, becauſe there was nothing but a meer ſhadow of ſervice, and no worſhipping of God in the Spirit. Ye know what Chriſt

ſaith ; *God is a Spirit, and he that worſhips him muſt do it in ſpirit and truth* Jo. 4. 24. It is the Heart and Soul that God delights into ; *My ſon give me thy heart*, for if thou give not thy heart, I care for nothing elſe : The heart is the whole man ; What a mans Affection is, that he is. Light is not ſo, it brings not the man alongs with it : Chriſt Jeſus hath given himſelf for us, and he requires that we offer our ſelves to him ; If we offer a Body to frequent his Houſe, our Feet to tread in his Courts, our Ears to hear his Word, what cares he for it, as long as the Soul doth not offer it ſelf up in Prayer or Hearing. And this was the ſin of this people, *Iſai.* 29. 13. *They draw near with the lips, and their heart is far from the Lord.* Now are not we their Children, and have ſucceeded to this. Is there any thing almoſt in our publick Services, but what is publick ? Is there any thing but what is ſeen of men ? Ye come to hear, ye ſit and hear, and is there any more ? The moſt part have their minds wandering, no thoughts preſent: for your thoughts are removed about your Barns and Corns, or ſome buſineſs in your head ; And if any have their Thoughts preſent, yet where are Affections? Which are the Soul and Spirit of Religion, without which, it is no true fire but wild-fire, if it be not both burning and ſhinning. Are ye ſerious in theſe Ordinances ? Or rather are ye not more ſerious in any thing beſide ? And now eſpecially when Gods Providence calls you to earneſt thoughts, when it crys to all men to enter into conſideration of their own

ways. I pray you, is there any Soul-affliction in your Fasts even for a day? Is there any real grief or token of it? Not a Fast in Scripture without weeping; We have kept many, and have never advanced so far. Shall the Lord then be pacified? Will not his Soul abhore them? How shall they appease him for your other provocations, when they are as Oyl to the Flame, to increase his Indignation? The most part of Christians are guilty here: We come to the Ordinances, as it were to discharge a Custome, and perform a Ceremony, that we may have it to say to our Conscience, that it is done, and there is no more intent and purpose. We do not seek to have Soul-communion with God: We come to Sermon to hear some new thing, or new truth, or new fashion of it. To learn a Notional Experience of Cases; But alas, this is not the great purpose and use of these things; It is to have some new sense of these things we know: We know already, but we should come to get the Truth more received in our Love, to serve God in our Spirits, and to return to him our selves in a Sacrifice aeceptable. This is the greater half, if not the whole of Religion, Love to Jesus Christ who loved us, and living to him, because he died for us, and livihg to him, because we love him. Now all our Ordinances and Duties, should be Channels to cary our Love to him, and occasions of venting our Affections.

Thirdly, the Lord rejected this peoples services, because they were exact and punctual in

them, and neglected other parts of his Commandments; And this is clearly expressed here. *I will not hear your prayers*, though there be many of them: Why? *Your hands are full of blood.* Ye come to worship me, and pray to me; and yet there are many Abominations in your Conversation, which you continue in, and do not challenge in your selves. Ye have unclean hands, and shall your prayer be accepted, which should come up with pure Hands? They took his Covenant in their mouth, and offered many Sacrifices, but what have ye to do with these things (sayeth the Lord) since ye hate to be reformed, since ye hate personal Reformation of your Lives, and in your Families? what have ye to do to profess to be my people, *Psal.* 50, 19, 17? The Lord requires an universality, if ye would prove sincerity: If ye have respect to any of his Commands, as his Commands, then will ye respect all. If ye be partial, and choose one Duty that is easy and refuse another harder; ye will come to the Church and hear, but ye will not pray at home; Ye will fast in publick, but not in private: Then (*sayes the Lord*) ye do not at all obey me, but your own humour; ye do not at all fast unto me, but unto your selves; As much as your interest lyes in a Duty, so much are ye carried to it: And I take this to be the reason, why many are so Eager in pursuing publick Ordinances, following Communions, and Conferences with Gods people, ready to Pray in publick rather then alone: If ye would follow them into their se-

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cret Chamber, how much indifferency is there? how great infrequency, how little fervency? VVell (*sayes the Lord*) did ye pray to me when ye prayed among others? No, ye prayed either to your selves, or the company or both. Did ye seek me in a Communion? No, (*sayeth the Lord*) ye sought not me, but your selves: If ye sought me indeed with others, ye would be als earnest if not more, to seek me alone, *Zech. 7. 6.* And again, the Lord especially requires the weightier matters of the Law to be considered; As it was among the Jews, their Ceremonies were commanded, and so good, but they were not so much good in themselves, as because they were means appointed for another end and use. But the Moral Law was binding in it self, and good in it self, without relation to another thing. And therefore Christ lays this heavy Charge to the Pharisees; *Ye tithe mint and anise*, Mat. 23. 23. *Woe unto you, for ye neglect the weightier matters of the Law, Judgement, Mercy and Faith, these ye ought to have done, and not left the other undone.* Are there not many who would think it a great fault, to stay away from the Church on the Sabbath or Week day, and yet will not stick to swear, to drink often; *VVoe unto you, for ye strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.* Therefore are the Prophets full of these Expostulations: The people seemed to make Conscience of Ceremonies and External Ordinances, but they did not order their Conversation aright; They did not execute Judgment and relieve the oppressed, did not walk soberly, did not mortify sinful lusts, &c. Alas, we

deceive our ſelves with the noiſe of a Covenant, and a Cauſe of God, we cry it up, as an Antidot againſt all evils, uſe it as a charm, even as the Jews did their Temple; and in the mean time, we do not care how we walk before God, or with our Neighbours: Well, (thus ſaith the Lord) *Truſt ye not in lying words*, Jer. 7. 4, 5, 6. If drunkenneſs reign among you, if filthineſs, ſwearing, oppreſſion, cruelty reign among you, your Covenant is but a ly, all your profeſſions are but lying words, and ſhall never keep you in your Inheritances and Dwellings. The Lord tells you what he requires of you, *Is it not to do juſtly, and walk humbly with God?* Mic. 6. 7. This is that which the grace of God teaches, *To deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly towards your God, your neighbour and your ſelf*, Tit. 2. 11, 12. And this he prefers to your publick Ordinances, your Faſting, Covenanting, Preaching and ſuch like. *Is not this to know me* (ſaith the Lord) Jer. 22. 15, 16. You think you know God, when you can diſcourſe well of Religion, and intertain conferences of practical Caſes; You think it is knowledge to underſtand Preachings and Scripture. But thus ſaith the Lord, *To do juſtly to all men, to walk humbly towards God, to walk ſoberly in your ſelves*, is more real knowledge of God, then all the Volumes of Doctors contain, or the heads of Profeſſors. Is this knowledge of God, to have a long flowriſhing diſcourſe, containing much Religion in it? Alas no; to do juſtly, to oppreſs none, to pray more in ſecret, to walk humbly

humbly and ſoberly, this is to know the Lord; practice is real knowledge indeed, it argues, that what a man knows, he receives in love, that the Truth hath a deep impreſſion on the heart, that the Light ſhines into the heart, to inflame it. What is knowledge before God? As much as principles Affection and Action, as much as hath Influence on your Converſations: If you do not, and love not what you know, is that to know the Lord? Shall not your knowledge be a Teſtimony againſt your practice, and no more?

SER-

SERMON X.

Isai. 1. 16. *Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil,* &c.

IF we would have a sum of pure and undefiled Religion, here it is set down in opposition to this people's shadow of Religion, that consisted in External Ordinances and Rites. We think that God should be als well pleased with our service as we our selves; therefore, we choose his commands, which our humour hath no particular antipathy against, and refuse others. But the Lord will not be so served; As he will not share with the world and divide the Soul and service of man with Creatures, so as Mammon should get part, and he his part. No, if we choose the one, we must refuse the other, for so will he not suffer his Word and Commands to be divided; There must be some universality in respect of the Gospel and the Law, and a conjunction of these two, or we cannot please him.

If Religion do not include the Gospel, we are yet upon the old Covenant of Works, according to which, none can be justified; If it do not include the Law in the Hands of a Mediator, then *we turn the Grace of god unto wantonness.* If it

it ſhut out Jeſus Chriſt and have no uſe of him, how can either we or our performances ſtand or be accepted before his holy eyes. If it exclude the Law that Chriſt came to eſtabliſh, how can he be pleaſed with our religion: Both of theſe offer an indignity to the Son of God. The Sum then of Chriſtian Religion is Believing and Sanctification of the ſpirit unto obedience, that is the root and fountain; this is the fruit and ſtream: Juſtification of our perſons, and ſanctification of our lives and hearts. *This is pure Religion and undefiled.* And therefore *Iſaiah* ſayes, *Waſh you, make you clean,* Cleanſe in the only true fountain of Chriſts blood. It is not your purifications of the Law; your many waſhings with water, and hyſope, *It is not the blood of buls and goats can purge your conſciences from dead works*: they do but purify your fleſh, but cannot waſh your ſouls worſe defiled. This blood of Jeſus Chriſt is that clean water that he muſt ſprinkle on you; if you would be clean. If you take any other water, any other righteouſneſs but his, and waſh thy ſelf therewith, ſuppoſe it be ſnow water that waſheth cleaneſt, thy moſt exact converſation, yet *he will plunge thee in the mire, till thy own cloaths abhore thee* Job 9. 30, 31. Now when ye have waſhed your perſons, *ye need not ſave to waſh your feet,* (ſayes Chriſt) your dayly converſation, reform it in the vertue of that blood, for *we are not called to uncleanneſs but unto holineſs.* And therefore, *Put away the evil of your doings.* &c. God hath put away the guilt of your doings by Juſtification, now put ye away the evil of your doings by San-

Sanctification, &c. And if ye would know what Sanctification is? *Ceaſe to do evil*; do not return to the old puddle to wallow in it. Ye that are cleanſed by this blood, O! think how unbeſeeming it is to you, to defile your ſelves again with theſe things ye are cleanſed from: But now, *learn to do well*: ye are given up to Chriſt, ye muſt be his Diſciples, and he will teach you: *Learn of me* (ſayes Chriſt) you need no other law almoſt but his example; he is a viſible and ſpeaking law, yet *ſeek Judgement*, As ye ought to look on my example; ſo eſpecially ponder that word and rule of practice and behaviour that I have left behind me and given out as the law-giver of the redeemed: have I redeemed you? And ſhould not I be the redeemmed and ranſomed ones King? Is there any ſociety in the world wants a law, order and government? neither muſt ye who are delivered from bondage, enfranchiſed, and made free indeed. Now ye ſhould of all men moſt live by a law. And when ye know that rule, then apply it to your ſeveral vocations and callings: let the Magiſtrat act according to it, and every man according to it: Religion conſiſts not in a generall notion, but condeſcends to our particular practice, to reform it. You ſee then what we would preſſe upon your Conſciences. It is true religion that we would have you perſwaded unto. All men have ſome kind of Religion, even Heathens who worſhip Idols; but the true religion reſpects the true and living God. Now what is it to worſhip the true and living God? what is the ſervice of him, that may be called Religion

on indeed? Should we be the prescrivers of it? No certainly, he must carve solely in that or else it cannot please him. Therefore *To the Law and to the Testemony*: if ye speak not according to this, and worship not according to this word of God, it is because there is no light into you. Ye may have a religion before men pure and undefiled, but if it be not so before God and the father, I pray you to what purpose is it? I am sure it is all lost labour, nay it is labour with loss, instead of gain. O that ye were perswaded to look and search the Scriptures: Think ye to have eternal life out of them? and think ye to have eternal life by them, who do not labour to know the way of it set down there? Every on of you have a different model of religion according to your fancies and breedings, according as your lusts will suffer you: The rule that the most part walk by is the course and example of the world. Is not this darkness, and grosse darkness? Others model their duties according to their ability, they will do all they can do with ease, and without troubling themselves, and they think God may be well pleased with that. I pray you consider and hear the word of the Lord, and Law of your God; hath he set down here the rule and perfect patern of true Religion, and will ye never so much own it, as to examine yours according to it? the scriptures are the touch-stone; If you would not have a counterfeit Religion deceiving you in the end when ye have trusted to it, I pray you try it by the word of God. Oh that this principle were once sunk into your hearts, I may not walk at randome, if I please my self, and

satisfy my own will, if that be not also Gods will, I shall have neither gain nor comfort of it, his will is manifested in his word, I will search and find what God hath required of me, for if I be not certain of his will, I may be doing all my dayes, and sweating out my life, and yet lose my pains and oyl. I say this word of the Lord that Isaiah calls to the people to hear V. 10. will at length judge you. Your Religion will be tryed in the day of accompts according to it, not according to your rules and methods ye have prescribed unto your selves. Now if ye in the mean time shall judge your selves according to another rule, and absolve your selves, and in the end God shall judge you according to this word and condemn you, were ye not fools in neglecting this word.

The whole will of God concerning your duty may be summed up in two; John hath one of them, 1 Jo. 3. 23. *And this is his Commandment, that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us Commandment.* And Paul hath another to the Thessalonians. 1 Thes. 4. 3. *This is the will of God, even your sanctification.* And these two make up this text so that it units both Gospel and Law. The Commandment of the Law comes forth, and is found that we have broken, and are guilty that we cannot answer for one of a thousand; the Law entring makes sin abound our inability, yea impossibility of obedience is more discovered: well then, the Gospel proclames the Lord Jesus Christ for the Saviour of sinners, and commands us

nder pain of damnation to believe in him, to
aſt our ſouls on him, as one able to ſave, as one
who hath obeyed the Law for us; ſo that this
ommand of believing in Chriſt is anſwerable
o all the breaches of the Law, and tends to
nake them up in Chriſt. When he proclaim-
d the Law on Mount *Sinai* with terrour, that
which ye hear expreſt is not his firſt Comand-
ent, which ye are in the firſt inſtance to obey,
or all theſe we have broken; but it hath a Go-
pel-command in its boſome, it leads to Jeſus
hriſt; and if ye could read the mind of God
i it, ye would reſolve all theſe commands which
ndemn you and curſe you, into one command
f believing in the Son, that ye may be ſaved
om that condemnation: And if ye obey this
ommand, which is his laſt command, and moſt
rremptory, then are the breaches of all the reſt
ade up, the intent of all the reſt is fulfilled,
ough not in your obedience, yet in Chriſts,
hich is better then ours. Believing in Chriſt
eſents God with a perfect righteouſneſs, with
obedience even to the death of the Croſs.
hen a ſinner hears the holy and ſpiritual ſenſe
the Law, and ſees it in the light of Gods ho-
neſs, O how vile muſt he appear to himſelf,
d how muſt he abhor himſelf? What origi-
l pollution, what actual pollution, what a
ntain within, what uncleanneſs in ſtreams
thout will diſcover it ſelf? Now when the
ſt part of men get any ſight of this, preſently
y fall a waſhing and cleanſing themſelves,
hiding their filthineſs. And what water take
y? Their own tears or ſorrows, their own

reſo-

reſolutions, their own reformations. But alas, we are ſtill more plunged in our own filthineſs, that is ſtill marked before him, becauſe all that is als foul as that we would have waſhen away. What garment do men take to hide themſelves ordinarily? Is it not their own righteouſneſs? Is it not a ſhirt of ſome duty that is ſpread over tranſgreſſions? Do not men think their ſins hid, if they can mourn and pray for a time? Their conſciences are eaſed by reflection upon this. But alas, thine iniquity is ſtill marked; Shall filthineſs hide filthineſs? *Thy righteouſneſs is as a vile garment, as a menſtruous cloth,* Iſa. 64. 6. as well as thine unrighteouſneſs, how then ſhall it cover thy nakedneſs? Seing it is ſo then, what is the Lords mind concerning our cleanſing: ſeing I ſtretched out hands, and many prayers will not do it, what ſhall I do? The Lord hath ſhewed thee what thou ſhalt do, and that is, that thou do nothing in relation to that end, that thou ſhouldſt undertake to waſh away the leaſt ſin by all thy repentance; yet muſt thou waſh and make clean, and the water is brought new unto you, even *the blood of Jeſus Chriſt that cleanſeth from all ſin*: waſh in this blood, and ye ſhall be clean. And what is it to waſh in this blood? It is to believe in Chriſt Jeſus, to lay hold on the all-ſufficient vertue of it, to truſt our ſouls to as a ſufficient ranſome for all our ſins; to ſpread the covering of Chriſt his righteouſneſs over our righteouſneſes and unrighteouſneſs, as having both alike need to be hid from his holy eyes. Jeſus Chriſt *came by water and by blood.* 1 Joh. 5. 6. by *water* to Sanctifie, and by *blood* to Juſtifie,

by the power and cleansing vertue of the Holy Ghost to take away sin in the beeing of it, and by the vertue of his blood to take away sin in the guilt and condemnation of it.

Now I conceive he presses a twofold exercise upon them in this washing, and both have relation to the blood of Jesus Christ, to wit, *repentance* and *faith*. If they be not all one, yet they are in this point inseparably conjoyned. Repentance waters and saps the roots of believing, which otherwise would dry up. Therefore in stead of outward forms and ceremonies of Religion, he presseth them to inward sorrow and contrition of heart for sin, that they might present an acceptable sacrifice to God, *a contrite heart*. This is more pleasing then many specious duties of men without, *Psal.* 50.7 *&c.* But when I press upon you repentance, do not conceive that we would have it preparatory to faith, that ye should sit down and mourn for your sins for a time, till your hearts be so far humbled, and then ye might come as prepared and fitted to Jesus Christ. This is the mistake of many Christians, which keeps them from solid settling. We find it ordinary, souls making scruples and objections against coming to Jesus Christ because of want of such preparations, of measures of humiliation and contrition, which they prescribe to themselves, or do behold in others: and so they sit down and apply themselves to such a work, applyes their consciences to the Law and curse; and they find in stead of softning, hardness, in stead of contrition of spirit, more dulness and security; At least they cannot

cannot get satisfaction to themselves in that they seek, and thus they hang their head over their impenitent hearts, and lament not so much that repentance is not, as that they cannot find it in themselves. Alas there are many diseases in this one malady. If it were imbowelled unto you, ye would not believe that such a way were so contradictory to the Gospel: For first, ye who are so, have this principle in your hearts which is the foundation of it. I cannot come to Christ so unclean, I must be a little washen, ere I come, the most gross uncleanness and hardness of my heart must be taken away, and so I shall be accepted: Alas, what derogation is this to the blessed Saviour? What absurdity is it, I am too unclean to come to the fountain, I must be a little purged before I come to this fountain that cleanseth from all Sin. I pray you, why was the fountain opened, was it not for sin and uncleanness? And this thou sayes by interpretation, If I were so and so humbled, then I might come and be worthy to come; when the want of such a measure debars thee as unworthy, Doth not the having of it in thy estimation make the worthy? And so ye come with a present in your hand to Jesus Christ, with a price and reward to him who gives freely. Again thou denyest Christ to be the only fountain of all Grace, and so it is most dishonourable to him. If thou would have repentance before thou come to him, where shall thou have it? will thou find it in thy heart, which is desperatly wicked? will thou seek it of God and not seek it in the Mediator Jesus Christ? God out of a Mediator will

will not hear thee. In a word there is both extream ſin, and extream folly in this way: great ſin becauſe it contradicts the tenure of the Goſpel, it diſhonours the Lord Jeſus, the exalted Prince, as if he were not the fountain of all grace, it is contrary both to the freedom of his grace, and to the fulneſs of it alſo. It is great folly, for thou leaves *the living fountain*, and goes ſeeking water in a wilderneſs; thou leaves the Garden, where all herbs grow, and wanders abroad to the wild Mountains; And becauſe thou canſt not find what thou ſeeks, thou ſits down and weeps beſide it. Repentance is in Chriſt, and no repentance ſo pleaſing to God as the mournings and relentings of a pardoned ſinner: but thou ſeeks it far from him, yea, refuſeth him for want of that which thou may have by chooſing him. Therefore we declare this unto you, that whatever ye be, whatever ye want, if ye think ye ſtand in need of Jeſus Chriſt, embrace him: If ye be exceeding vile in your own eyes, and cannot get repentance as ye would, to cleanſe your ſelves, here is the fountain opened, and ready to waſh into. Yet this we muſt tell you, that no ſinner can believe but he that repents, not becauſe repentance is required as a preparation to give a man a warrand and right to believe; I know no ground of faith but our neceſſity, and the Lords promiſe and command unto us, but becauſe no ſoul can truly flie in to Jeſus Chriſt to eſcape ſins guilt, but he that deſires to be delivered from ſin it ſelf: And therefore the moſt part of you fancy a faith which you have not, becauſe there is no poſſibility

that

that men will come out of themselves, till they be pressed out by discovered sin and misery within: your woulds and wishes after Christ and salvation, that many of you have, are not the real exercises of your souls flying unto him for salvation. If ye did indeed turn in to Jesus Christ, your hearts would turn the back upon sin, and these sins ye seek remission of. Now all the desire that many men have of Christ, is this, I would fain have his salvation, if I might keep my Sin: I would gladly be delivered from the guilt of sin, if he would let me keep still the sin. But will Christ make any such bargain?

If this blood only wash from sin, oh, how many ly in their sins, and wallow in their filthiness. *There is a geueration clean in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness.* Prov. 30. 12. Oh that ye believed this: If ye be not now washed, eternity shall find you unclean; And woe to the Soul that enters eternity with all the pollution of its sins: Can such a soul enter into the high and Holy place, the clean City? No certainly, it must be without among the Dogs and Swine, it must be kept in darkness for ever. It is then of great importance that ye be washen from your filthiness. Now I ask you, Is it so or not? are ye made clean and washen from the guilt of your sins? every one of you almost will say so, and think so, and yet sayes the Scripture, *There is a generation pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed.* Is there a generation such? Is there any such? Oh then, think its possible you may be mistaken in the opinion of your own cleanness: do any con-

conceive themſelves pardoned, and yet are not ſo, think it is poſſible you may have deceived your ſelves, eſpecially ſince ye have never examined it: but are there ſo many ſo, a whole generation, the moſt part of men, then as you love your ſouls, try; for it is certain that moſt part of you muſt be deceived. *Is* there a generation in the viſible Church not waſhen, and yet every one thinks himſelf clean, then certainly the moſt part are in a great deluſion, will ye then once examine whether or not ye be deluded with them. *It* ſhall be your peace to know it, while it may be amended. But how comes it to paſs that ſo many hearing of the Goſpel, and lying near this fountain, are not cleanſed? *I* think certainly, becauſe they will not have a through cleanſing, they get none at all: All men would love Chriſts blood well to pardon ſin, but who will accept of the water to ſanctifie them from ſin, but Chriſt came with both. Shall this Blood be ſpent upon numbers of you who have no reſpect to it; but would ſtill wallow in your filthineſs? Would ye have God pardoning theſe ſins, ye never throughly reſolve to quite? But how is it that ſo many men are clean in their own eyes, and yet not waſhed? I think indeed, the reaſon of it is, they make a kind of waſhing, which they apprehend ſufficient, and yet knows not the true Fountain. We find men taking much Sope and Nitre, when convinced of ſin, or charged with it, and thereupon, ſoon abſolving themſelves. If ye ask their grounds, they will tell you, they repent and are ſorry for it, they purpoſe to make

amends, and they think amendment a good compenſation for the paſt wrong; They will, it may be, vow to drink no more for a year after they have been drunk; They will confeſs their ſin in publick, and all this they do without having any thought of Jeſus Chriſt, or the end of his coming, and can abſolve themſelves from ſuch grounds, though in the mean time, Chriſt come not ſo much as in their mind. And therefore, are they not really waſhed; All thy righteouſneſs is unclean before God, and thy repentances defile thee, and yet becauſe of ſome ſuch Duties thou deceiveſt thy ſelf, and art clean in thine own eyes: Theſe have ſome beauty in thy eyes, and thou puts them between thy filthineſs and thy eye, and ſo conceives that thou art clean. I think a reaſon alſo why many men are clean in their own eyes, and conceive that God hath pardoned their ſin, is becauſe they have forgotten it; It is not recent in their memory, and makes no preſent wound in their Conſcience. And therefore, they apprehend God ſuch as themſelves, they think he hath forgotten it alſo. But Oh! how terrible ſhall it be, when God brings to remembrance, and ſets our ſins in order before us: Ye think God cares not for your ſins, that he forgives them becauſe he is ſilent at them, *Pſal.* 50. 21. But the Lord ſhall one day ſet them before thee, and thou ſhalt know they were ſtill marked before him.

Ye who have waſhen in this Blood, ye may rejoyce, for it ſhall make you clean every whit. Your iniquities that ſo defiled you, ſhall not

not be found. O! the precious vertue of that Blood that can purge away a souls spots: All the Art of Men and Angels could not reach this. This Redemption and Cleansing was precious, and would have ceased for ever. But this Blood is the Ransome, this Blood cleanseth, and so perfectly, that it shall not appear, not only to mens eyes, but also Gods peircing Eye. Sinners quite your own righteousness, why defile ye your selves more? When your eyes are opened, ye will find it so, here is washing, apply your selves to this Fountain; And if ye do indeed so, if ye expect cleansing from Jesus Christ, I pray you return not to the puddle. Ye are not washen from sin, to sin more, and defile your self more: If ye think ye have liberty to do so, ye have no part in this Blood.

H SER-

SERMON XI.

Isai. 1. 16. *Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil,* &c.

THere are two evils in sin, one is the Nature of it, another the Fruit and sad Effect of it. In it self it is filthiness, and contrair to Gods Holiness, an abasing of the immortal soul, a spot in the face of the Lord of the Creatures, that hath far debased him under them all: Though it be so unnatural to us, yet it is now in our fallen estate become as it were natural, so that men agree with it, as if it were sunk and drunk into the very soul of man. The other is the guilt and desert of punishment and obligation to it. All men hate this, but they cannot hold it off: They eat the Tree and Fruit of Death, they must eat Death also: They must have the wages of sin, who have wrought for it. Now the Gospel hath found a remedy for lost man in Jesus Christ; He comes in the Gospel with a twofold blessing, a twofold vertue, a pardoning vertue and a sanctifying vertue, *Water and Blood*, 1 Jo. 5. 6. He comes to forgive sin, and to subdue sin; To remove the guilt of it, and then the self of it. Gods appointment had inse-

parabl-

parably joyned them ; And *Christ came not to diſſolve the Law, but to eſtabliſh it.* If he had taken away the puniſhment, and left the ſin in its being, he had weakened the Law and the Prophets. That conjunction of ſin and wrath, which is both by divine appointment, and ſuitable alſo unto their own natures muſt ſtand, that Divine Juſtice may be intire. And therefore, he that comes to redeem us from the curſe of the Law, hath alſo this Commiſſion, to redeem us from ſin and all tranſgreſſions of the Law, *Rom.* 11. 26. and *Gal.* 3. 13. He that turns away the wrath of God from men, turns alſo ungodlineſs from them which provoked his wrath; And ſo he is a compleat Redeemer, and a compleat Redeemer he had not been otherwayes. If he had removed Wrath only, and left us under the bondage of ſin, it had not been half redemption, *he that commits ſin, is the ſervant of ſin.* But this is perfect freedom and liberty, to be made free from ſin, for it was ſin that ſubjected us to wrath, and ſo was the firſt Tyrant and the greateſt. The Goſpel then comes with a joyful ſound unto you, but many of you miſtake it, and apprehends it to be a Doctrine of liberty and Peace, and that unto ſin ; But if it were ſo, it were no joyful ſound. If there were proclaimed a liberty to all men to do as they liſt, no puniſhment, no wrath to be feared, I would think that Doctrine no glade news, it were but the perpetuating of the bondage of unreaſonable ſoul. But this is glade news, a deliverry and freedom proclaimed in the Goſpel. But what ? Not unto ſin, but from ſin, and

this is to be free indeed. We ought more
Jesus Christ for this, then for redemption fro
Wrath, because sin is a greater evil then wrath
Yea, wrath were not so, if sin were not. Ther
fore he exhorts to wash, and wash so, that th
may make clean: Take Jesus Christ for J
stification and Sanctification, imploy both t
Water and the Blood, that he hath con
with. But, because all men pretend a willin
ness to have Christ their Saviour, and their s
pardoned through his Blood, who, notwit
standing hate to be reformed, and would se
no more of Christ: Therefore, he branch
out that part of the Exhortation, in several pa
ticulars: All men have a general likeing of r
mission of sins, but renouncing of it, is to mar
a hard Doctrine, they would be glade that G
put their evils out of his sight, by passing th
by, and forgetting them; But they will
be at the pains of putting away their evils fr
his sight: And therefore, the Gospel wh
comprehends these two united, is not really
ceived by many, who pretend to be follow
of it. *This is his Command, that ye beli*
Some pretend to obey this, and yet hath no
gard of that other part of his Will, even t
Sanctification. And therefore, their Fai
dead, it is a fancy. If ye did indeed believe
receive Christ for pardon of sin, it were
possible, but your Souls would be ingaged
constrained, to indeavour to walk in all
pleasing: But it is an evident token of one
is not washed from his sin, and believes n
Christ, if he conceive within his heart, a

er latitude and liberty, to walk after the flesh, and be imboldened to continue in sin, because of his Grace and Mercy. And yet such are the most part of you. Upon what ground do ye delay repentance? Upon what presumption do ye continue in your sins, and puts over the serious study of holiness, till a more fit time? Is it not from an apprehension of the Grace and Mercy of God, that ye think, ye may return any time, and be accepted, and so ye may in the mean time, take as much pleasure in sin as ye can, seing ye may get leave also for Gods Mercy; I pray you consider, that you have never apprehended Gods Mercy aright, ye are yet in your sins, and certainly as yet, are not washed from them.

Put away the evil, &c.] When the Spirit convinces a Soul, he convinces a man, not only of evil doings, but of the evil of his doings; Not only of sin, but of the sinfulness of sin; And not only of those actions which are in themselves sinful, but also of the iniquity of Holy things. I think no man will come to wash in Christs Blood, till this be discovered. If he see much wickedness, many evil doings, yet he will labour to wash away these by his own tears and repentance and well doing. As long as he hath any good Actions, as Prayers, Fasting and such like, he will cover his evil doings by them: He will spread the skirts of such righteousness over his uncleanesse: and when he hath hid it from his own eyes, he apprehends that he hath hid it from Gods also: He will wash his bloody hands with many Prayers, and

thinks they may be clean enough : We see blasphemers of Gods Name, use to joyn a prayer for forgiveness with their oath and curse, and they never trouble themselves more : Oh what mocking of God is this ? Now als long as it is thus, there is no imployment for the Son of Gods Blood, they can do their own turn : Men will not come to Christ, because it is the best way, if they see any else beside. None will come till he see it is the only way. None can wash in Christ except they wash all. If ye have any thing that needs not washing, his Blood is not for you : his righteousness is not known, when ye establish all, or a part of your own. I fear the most part of you have no imployment for Christ ; Ye have extream need of him, but ye know it not ; For there are many things which ye will not number among your sins, your Prayers, your Hearing, Reading, Singing, publick and private Worship, giving Alms, *&c.* How many of you were never convinced of any sin in these ; Do ye not conceive God is well pleased with you for them. Your Conscience hath convinced you, it may be of grosse sins, as drunkenness, filthiness, swearing, *&c.* But ye are not convinced for your well doing ; Ye find not a necessity of a Mediator for these : I think many of you never confessed any such thing, except in a general notion. Alas, how ignorant are men of themselves ? We are unclean, how can any thing we do cleanse us ? Are not we unclean, and do not our hands touch our own works ? Shall not then our own uncleanness defile

our

our good Actions, more then they can cleanſe us? *Hag.* 2. 13. The ignorance of this, makes men go about to build up their old ruined righteouſneſſe, and ſtill ſeek ſomething in themſelves, to make up wants in themſelves. Always, when the Light of God hath diſcovered you to your ſelves, ſo that ye can turn your eye no where, but uncleanneſſe fills it, though your Converſation be blameleſſe in the world, ſo as men can challenge nothing, yet ye have found within and without, nothing but matter of mourning; I ſay, this is an evidence that the Spirit hath ſhined and inlightened thy darkneſſe. Now when thou hath fled unto Jeſus Chriſt for a covering to thy righteouſneſſe, als well as unrighteouſneſſe, it remains that thou now *put away the evil of thy doings*; Put not away thy doings, but the evil of them. We challenge your Prayers, Services, and publick Duties, even as the Prophet did; We declare unto you, that God is as evil pleaſed with them, as your drunkenneſſe, whoreing, intemperance, *&c.* The moſt part of you, are no more acceptable when ye come to the Church, then when ye go to the Tavern, your praying and curſing is almoſt all one. What ſhall we do then, ſay ye? Shall we pray no more, and hear no more? No, ſay I, put not away your Prayers and Ordinances, *but put away the evil of them, from before his ſight.* Rather multiplie your doings, but deſtroy the evil and iniquity of your doings. And there is one evil or two above all, that makes them hateful to him; Ye truſt to much in them: Here is the iniquitie,

ye idol of jealouſie ſet up, ye make your doings your righteouſneſſe, and in that notion, they are abomination. There is nothing makes your worſhip of God ſo hateful, as this, ye think ſo much of it, and juſtifies your ſelf by it: And then God knows what it is, that ye ſo magnifie, and makes the ground of your claim to Salvation; it is even an empty ceremony, a ſhadow without ſubſtance; a body without a Soul; You ſpeak and look and hear, you exerciſe ſome outward Senſes, but no inward Affections: And what ſhould that be to him, who is *a Spirit?*

They did not obſerve the Iniquity of their Holy things: and therefore are they marked by him, *they are in his ſight*: They did not ſee ſo many faults in their Prayers and Services; They wondered why God did chide them ſo much; But God marks what we miſſe, he remembers when we forget: We cover our ſelves with a Vail of External Duties, and think to hide all the Rottenneſſe of our Hearts, but it will not be hid from him, before whom, Hell hath no covering, *all hearts are open and naked before him.* Your ſecret ſins are in the ſight of his Countenance. Men hear you Pray, ſee you preſent at Worſhip, they know no more, at leaſt they ſee no more. Nay, but the formality of thy Worſhip, the wanderings of thy Mind are in his ſight. And O! how excellent a Rule of walking were this, to do all in his ſight and preſence. Oh that ye were perſwaded in your hearts of his All ſeing, All-ſearching Eye, and All-knowing Mind. VVould

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ye not be more ſollicitous and anxious anent the frame of your hearts, then the liberty of your ſpeech, or External geſture? Oh how would men retire within themſelves, to faſhion their Spirits before this All-ſearching, and All-knowing Spirit. *If* ye do not obſerve the evils of your hearts and ways, they are in his ſight, and this will ſpoil all acceptance of the good of them: *If* ye obſerve the evils of your well doing, and bring theſe alſo to the Fountain, to waſh them, and be about this earneſt indeavour of perfecting Holineſſe, of perfecting well-doings in the Power and Fear of God; then certainly, he will not ſet your ſins in the Light of his Countenance, the good of your way ſhall come before him, and the evil of it Chriſt ſhall take away.

Ceaſe to do evil, &c.] Theſe are the two Leggs a Chriſtian walks on; if he want any of them, he is lame and cannot go equally, ceaſing from evil, and doing good. Nay, they are ſo united, that the one cannot ſubſiſt without the other. If a man do not ceaſe from evil and his former luſts, he cannot do well, or perfite Holineſs. There are many different Diſpoſitions, and Conditions of men; There are generally one of two. Some have a kind of abſtinence from many groſſe ſins, and are called civil honeſt men, they can abide an inqueſt and cenſure of all their Neighbours, they can ſay no ill of them; But alas, there is als little good to be ſaid: He drinks not, ſwears not, whores not, ſteals not. Nay, but what doth he well? Alas, the World cannot tell

what he doth, for he prays not in secret, nor in his family, he is void of some offences towards men, but there are many duties called to, towards both God and men, he is a stranger to. He oppresses not the poor, nay, but he is not charitable either, to give to them; He defrauds no man, but whom helps he by his means? Again, there are others, they will boast of some things done; they pray, they keep the Church well, they do many good turns, and yet for all that, they do not cease to do evil; They were drunkards, so they are; They can swear for all their prayers, are given to contention, to lying, to filthiness, &c. Now I say, neither of these Religions is pure and undefiled. Religion is a through and intire change: It is like a new Creation, that must destroy the first Subject, to get place for that which is to come; It is a putting off old Garments, to put one new; The putting off an old form and engraven Image, to make place for a new engraving. Men do not put a Seal above a Seal, but deface the old, and so put on the new; Men do not put new Cloaths upon the old, but put the old off, and so they have place for the new: Religion must have a naked man; Godliness is a new Suit, that will not go on upon so many Lusts; No, no, it is more meet and more conformed unto the inwards of the Soul then so: The cold must go out as the heat comes in: Many men do not change their Garments, but mends them, puts some new pieces into them; They retain their old lusts, their heart idols, and they will add un-

unto these a patch of some External Obedience; But alas, is this godlinesse? Hypocrisie will be content of a mixture, sin is the harlot, whose heart could endure to see the Child parted, It can give God a part, to get leave to brook the most part; Sin will give God liberty to take some of the outward man, if it keep the heart and soul. But God will not reckon on these terms, he will have all the man or nothing, for he is the Righteous Owner. True godlinesse cannot mix so, but false and counterfeit may do it well. Other men again, possibly uncloaths themselves of some practices, but they put on no new cloathing; They reform some passages for fear of censure, or shame, or such like; They are found, it may be, blameless, either because so Educated, or their Disposition is against particular grosse sins. But they are not cloathed upon with Holinesse and well doing, and so they are but naked and bare in Gods sight, not beautiful: They have sweept their house, and some Devil put out or kept out, but because the good Spirit enters not, ordinarily seven worse enter again into such men.

There is a great moment of perswasion in this order of the Exhortation, *Wash you*, and then, *put away the evil of your doings*, and *cease to do evil*. Do not continue in your former customs. It is strange, how contrary our hearts are to God; We use to turn Grace unto wantonnesse; We use to take more liberty to sin, when we conceive we are pardoned: But I do not know any more strong and constraining perswasion

swasion to forsake sin, then the consideration of the forgiving of it might yeild. Oh what an inducement and grand Argument, to renouncing of evils, is the consideration of the remission of them. This is even that ye are now called unto, who have fled to Jesus to escape Wrath: What should ye be taken up with, in all the World but this, to live to him henceforth, who died for us? To forsake our own old way, and that from the constraining principle of Love to him, 2 *Cor.* 5. 14, 15. Oh, that ye would enforce your own hearts with such a thought, when there are any solicitations to sin, to former lusts. Should I that am dead to sin, live any longer therein? *Rom.* 6. Should I who am washed from such pollutions, return again to the pollutions of the World? Should I again defile my self, who am cleansed by so precious Blood? And forget him that washed me? *Should I return with the dog to the vomit, and with the sow to the puddle?* God forbid. I pray you consider, if you be Christians indeed, give a proof of it. What hath Jesus Christ done for you? He hath given himself, his own precious Blood a Ransom for us, will ye not give up your selves to him? Will not ye give him your sins and lusts, which are not your self, but enemies to your self? Will not ye put away these ills, that he came in this world to destroy? Art thou a Christian, and are there yet so many sins, and works of the Devil raigning in thee, and set up in Gods sight? What an inconsistency is this? If thou be his follower, thou must put these away.

way. Give them a bill of divorcement, never to turn again. Many a man parts with his ſin, becauſe it leaves him, he puts it not away; Temptation goes, and occaſion goes away, but the root of it abids within him. Many men have particular jarrs with their corruptions, but they reconcile again, as differences between married perſons; They do not ariſe to hate their ſin in its ſinful Nature. But if thou hate it, then put it away. And who would not hate it, that Chriſt ſo hated, that he came to deſtroy it? 1 Jo. 3. 5. What a great indignity muſt it be to the Goſpel, to make that the ground of living in ſin, which is preſſed in it, as the grand perſwaſion to forſake it? Seing we are waſhed from the guilt of it, Oh let us not love to keep the ſtain and filth of it. Why are we waſhen? Was it not Chriſts great intendment and purpoſe, to purifie to himſelf a Holy People? We are waſhen from the guilt of our ſins, and is it to defile again? Is it not rather *to keep our ſelves henceforth clean, that we may be preſented holy and unblameable in his ſight?* That we may ſeek to be als like Heaven as may be. But who ceaſes to do theſe evils, that he ſays are pardoned? Who puts away the evils of theſe doings, the guilt whereof, he thinks God hath put away? Could ye find in your hearts to intertain thoſe evils ſo familiarly, to pour out your Souls unto them, if that Peace of God were indeed ſpoken unto you? Would not the reflex of his Love prove more conſtraining on your hears? Were it poſſible, that if ye did indeed conſider, that your luſts coſt Chriſt a

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dear price, to ſhed his Blood, that your pleaſures made his Soul heavy to death, and that he hath laid down his Life to Ranſom you from Hell; were it poſſible, I ſay, that ye would live ſtill in theſe luſts, and chooſe theſe pleaſurs of ſin, which were ſo bitter to our Lord Jeſus? I beſeech you be not deceived, if ye love the puddle ſtill, that ye cannot live out of it, do not ſay that ye are waſhed? Ye may have waſhen your ſelves with Sope and Nitre, but the Blood of Chriſt hath not cleanſed: For if that Blood ſprinkled your Conſcience once, to give you an anſwer to all challenges, it could not but ſend forth Streams to purifie the heart, and ſo the whole man. The Blood and VVater might be joyned, the Juſtifying Saviour, and the Sanctifying Spirit; For both theſe are in this Goſpel waſhing. 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. 1 *Jo* 5. 6. *This is he that came by water and blood, even Jeſus Chriſt, not by water only, but by water and blood.* Not by water only, but by blood alſo, and I ſay, not by blood only, but by water alſo. The very purpoſe of forgiveneſſe, is not to lay a foundation for more ſin, but that men may ſin no more, but break off their ſins. It is indeed impoſſible for a man to amend his ways, till he be pardoned, for his ſin ſtands betwixt him and God, God is a conſuming fire, the guilt of it hinders all meeting of the Soul with God, at leaſt, all influence from him; But when an open Door is made in Chriſt, that men may come and Treat with God, notwithſtanding of rebellions, and have the Curſe relaxed: O now he may go about his Duty comfortably.

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Am I escaped from Hell, why should I any more walk in the way to it? And now he hath the Spirit given for the asking. There are some Cessations from sin, that are not real forsakings of it, and ceasings from it: You know men will abstain from Eating for a season, that they may be made ripe for it another time: Some do not cease from sin, but delayes it only, they put it not away, but put it off only for another time, till a fitter occasion and opportunity. And this is so far from ceasing from it, that it is rather an deliberat choice of it, and Election of conveniency for it: There may be some pure and simple ceasings from sin, meer abstinence, or rather meer absence of sin for a season, that is not ceasing from doing evil. The Christians ceasing hath much Action in it: It is such a ceasing from doing evil, that it is a putting away of evil; It hath the Soul and Spirit joyned in that Cessation. Sin requires violence to put it out, where it hath haunted, it is an intruding Guest, and an usurping Guest: It comes in first as a supplicant and beggar, prays for a little lodging for a night, and promises to be gone, the temptation speaks but for a little time, even the present time, for a little one, it seeks but litle at first, least it be denyed; but if once it be received into the Soul, it presently becomes Master, and can command its own time, and its abode: Then ye will not so easily put it out, as ye could hold it out, for it is now joyned with that wicked, desperat party within you, *the heart*, and these united Forces are too strong for you. According as a lust is one with a mans

heart,

heart, or hath nearer connexion with his heart and Soul, it is the worse to put away: for will ye drive a man from himself, it is the cuting off an right hand, or plucking out of an right eye. To make a man cease from such evils, it requirs that a stronger power be within him, then is in the world. Men may cease for a time, for want of occasions or temptations to sin; when there is no active principle in them, restraining or keeping their Soul from such sins as appears after, when no sonner occasion is offered, but they run as the Horse to his course, or the Stone falleth downward, they conceive Fire as easily as dry Stubble: That is not Christian ceasing, which is that which the Soul argues it self to, from grounds of the Gospel. Should I who am dead to sin, live any longer therein? This is a principle of Cessation, and this is true liberty, when the Soul can abstain from present temptations, upon such grounds and perswasions of the Gospel, then it is really above it self, and above the world, then hath it that true victory. Many men cease only from sin, because sin ceases from them, they have not left it, but it hath left them. The old man thinks himself a changed man, because he wallows not in the lusts of the flesh, as in his youth. But alas, no thanks to him, for that he hath not ceased from his lusts: but temptations to him, or power and ability in him to follow them hath ceased, there is no change in his Spirit within, for he can talk of his former sins with pleasure; he continues in other evils as bad, but more suitable to his age. In a word, he is so inwardly, that if he were in his

his body, and occaſions offering as before, he would be juſt the ſame. Some again ceaſe from ſome evils, from ſome principles; but alas, they are no Chriſtian principles: What reſtrains the multitude of Civilians from groſſe ſcandals? *Is* it any thing but affectation of a good Name and report in the world? *Is* it not fear of reproach or cenſure? Is it not becauſe poſſibly they have no particular inclination to ſuch evils? And yet there are many other evils of the heart als evil, though more ſubtill, that they pleaſe themſelves in, as Pride, Covetouſneſſe, Malice, Envie, Ambition, *&c.* What ſhall all your abſtinence be accompted of, when it is not love to Jeſus Chriſt, or hatred of ſin that principles it? It is not the outward abſtinence that will commend you. Such it is, as the principles of it are. And theſe only are the true Chriſtian principles of Mortification, love of Jeſus Chriſt, *which conſtrains men to live no more to themſelves*, but to be new Creatures, 1 *Cor.* 5. 14, 15. And hatred of ſin in its Nature as ſin: A Chriſtian ſhould have a mortal hatred at it, as his mortal enemy. It is not Chriſtianity, to abſtain from ſome fleſhly luſts, if ye conſider them not as your Souls enemies, 1 *Pet.* 2. 11. *Ye that love the Lord, hate evil*, Pſal. 97. 10. Theſe are chained together: *Davids* hatred was a Soul hatred, an abhorency, *Pſal.* 119. 163. *I hate and abhore lying*, it is like the natural Antipathies, that are among Creatures. The Soul hates not only the perſon of it, but the nature of it alſo. Men often hate ſin, only as it is circumſtantiate, but Chriſtian hatred is a hatred of the

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Nature, like the deadly feuds, which are enmities against the kind and name. *I will put enmity between thy seed*, &c. *It is a perfect hatred*, Psal. 139. 22. And so it cannot endure any sin, because all is contrary to Gods Holinesse, and offensive to his Spirit. I would think it easier to forsake all evil, and cease from doing any evil, I mean presumptuously, with a willing mind and endeavour, then indeed to forsake one; for as long as ye entertain so many lusts like it, they shall make way for it. It were easier to keep the whole Commandments in an Evangelical sense, then indeed to keep any one, for all of them help another, and subsist they cannot one without another, so that ye take a fooliſh course, who go about particular reformations. Ye scandalous sinners professe that ye will amend the particular fault ye are guilty of, and in the mean time, ye take no head to your Souls and Lives; Therefore it shall be either in vain, or not acceptable: How pleasant a life would Christians have, if they would indeed be perswaded to be altogether Christians; The halfing of it neither pleaseth God nor delights you; It keeps you but in continual torment between God and Baal: your own lusts usurpe over you, and that of Christ in you challenges the Supremacy. so ye are as men under two Masters. each striving for the place, and were it not better to be under one settled Government. If there be any tenderneſſe of God in your hearts, or light in your Consciences, they cannot but testifie against your lusts, these strange Lords; Your lusts again, they drive you on against your Conscience;

ence ; Thus ye are divided and tormented betwixt two, your own Conſcience and Affections. You have thus the pain of Religion, and know not the true pleaſure of it: You are marred in the pleaſures of ſin, Conſcience and the love of God is a worm to eat that Gourd, it is Gall and Vinegar mixed in with them. Were it not more wiſdom, to be either one thing or another. If ye will have the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon, take them wholly, and renounce God, and ſee if your heart can endure that. If your heart cannot condeſcend to that, I pray you renounce them wholly, and ye ſhall find more exquiſit and ſure pleaſures in godlineſſe, at his Right Hand: O what a noble entertainment hath the Soul in God; The Peace and Joy of the Holy Ghoſt is a Kingdom indeed.

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SERMON XII.

Isai. 26. 3. *Thou shalt keep him in perfect Peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.*

ALL men love to have priviledges above others. Every one is upon the designe and search after some well-being, since *Adam* lost that which was true happinesse: We all agree upon the general notion of it, but presently men divide in the following of particulars. Here all men united in seeking after some good, something to satisfie their Souls, and satiat their desires. Nay, but they scatter presently in the prosecution of it, because, according to every mans fancy and corrupt humour, they attribute that good unto diverse things; And when they meet with disappointment, they change their opinion of that, but are made no wiser, for they turn from one to another of that same kind, in which their imagination hath supposed blessednesse to be: And therefore, they will return to that which they first loathed and rejected. Is there then no such thing in the world as blessednesse? Is it not to be found among men? Are all mens unsatiable desires in vain? Is a Creature made up and composed of desires, to keep

keep it in continuall torment and vexation of ſpirit? No certainly, it is, and it is found by ſome; All the world ſtrive about it, but the man only who truſts and believs in God, he it is who carries it away from them, who hath this priviledge beyond the world. And why do ſo many miſſe it? Becauſe they do not ſee nor ſuſpect that it is bleſſedneſſe indeed which he injoyes: But on the contrair, their corrupted imaginations repreſent godlineſſe, and a godly mans ſelf-indigency and dependance on God, as the greateſt miſery and ſhame. The godly man hids not his bleſſedneſſe from the world. No, he proclaimes it when he hath found it; He would that all enjoyed it with him. And if there were no more to declare, that it doth not conſiſt in worldly things, this might ſuffice; they are not communicable to many, without the prejudice and loſſe of every one. But none will believe his report, of his own Eſtate.

If ye would conſider, here is that which men toyl for, compaſſe Sea and Land for, here it is, *near thee, in thy mouth*: It is not in Heaven, that thou ſhould ſay, *How ſhall I aſcend to it?* It is not in Hell below, that thou ſhouldeſt ſay, *Who ſhall deſcend?* It is not in the ends of the Earth; No, *it is near thee, in thy mouth*: It is not beyond the Sea, *but it is near, in thy mouth, even the word of faith*, which Chriſt preached, *Rom.* 10 6, 7, 8. And what ſayes that word? *Believe with thy heart and thou ſhalt be ſaved; Truſt in God and depend on him, and ye ſhall have peace*, and that perfect peace: and this

this peace ſhall be kept by God himſelf. *Bleſſed then is the man that truſts in the Lord*, Pſal. 40. 4. Ye make a long journey in vain, ye ſpend your Labour and Money in vain, all the pains might be ſaved, it is not where ye ſeek it; ye travel about many creatures, ye go to many doors, and enquire for Happineſſe and Peace, but ye go too far off, ye need not ſearch ſo many Coaſts, it is nearer hand, in this word of the Goſpel, the joyful ſound; It is this that proclaimes peace. Peace is a comprehenſive word, eſpecially in Scripture. It was the Jews ſalutation, *Peace be to you*, meaning happineſſe and all good things: It is Chriſts ſalutation, is Happineſſe, and theſe are either one, or inſeparably conjoyned as one. Grace is Holineſſe, Peace and Grace. Grace is Holineſſe, Peace to be reſtored, to miſerable man by Jeſus Chriſt, gels Song, *Glory to God, peace on earth*, Luk. 2. 14. Bleſſedneſſe was reſtored, or brought near and upon the apprehenſion of this, Angels Sing. It was this, Chriſt came in the world with, and when he went away, he left this Legacy to his Children, *My peace I leave you*, Jo. 14 27. We loſt happineſſe, and all men are on a vain purſuit of it ſince, but it is found, and found by one of our Kin, our Lord Jeſus, our Elder Brother, he hath found it, or made it, and brought it near us in the Goſpel, for the receiving, and who ſo receives him by Faith, and truſting in him, receives that priviledge, that peace. He endured much trouble to gain our peace, he behoved to undergo miſery, to

to purchase our Blessednesse, and so it is his own, and who so receives him, receives it also.

The newes of such a peace might be seasonable in the time of warr and trouble, if we apprehended our need of it. It is not a peace from warr and trouble, but a peace in warr and trouble. *My peace I leave you, in the world ye shall have trouble*, Jo. 14. 27. and 16. at the end. What a blessed Message is it, that there is a peace, and a perfect peace, attainable in the midst of warrs, confusions and calamities of the times publick and personal, a perfect peace, a compleat peace, even compleat without the accession of outward and worldly peace, that needs it not, nay, appears most perfect and intire in it self, when it is striped naked of them all. Behold what a priviledge the Gospel offers unto you; Ye need not be made miserable but if you please. This is more then all the world can afford you, there is no man can promise to himself immunity from publick dangers, or personal, from many griefs and disappointments: But the Gospel bids you reckon up all your troubles and miseries that ye can meet with in the world, and yet in such a case, if ye hearken to wisdom, there is a peace that will make you forget that trouble; *Her wayes are wayes of pleasantness, and all her pathes are peace*, Pro. 3. 17. I will undertake to make thee blessed, says *Wisdom, the Fathers Wisdom.* When all the world hath given thee over for miserable, when thou hast spent thy substance on the Physitians, and in vain, come to me, I

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can heal that desperate Disease by a word, *I create peace*, when natural Causes have given it over, I create it of nothing, *I will keep you in perfect peace.*

You have then here, three things of special concernment, in these times and all times, a blessedness, a perfect peace attainable, the way of it, and the Fountain of it: The Fountain of it, the preserver of it, is *God himself*; The way to attain it, is *trusting in God*, and *staying on him*. This sweetness of peace, is in God the Tree of Life, Faith puts to its hand, and plucks the Fruit of the Tree; Hope and Dependance on God, is a kind of tasting of that Fruit and eating of it, and then followeth this perfect peace, as the delightful relish and sweetness that the Soul finds in God, upon tasting how gracious he is. God himself is *the life of our souls, the fountain of living waters, the life and light of men.* Faith and trusting in God, draws out of this Fountain, out of this deep well of Salvation, and staying on God drinks of it, till the soul be refreshed with peace and tranquility, such as passeth Natural Understanding. Christ Jesus is the Tree of Life, that grows in the Garden of God, trusting in him by Faith, implants a Soul in him, roots a Soul in him, by vertue of which Union it springs up and grows into a living Branch, by staying and depending upon him, we live by him, and hence springs this blessed and sweet Fruit of peace of soul and conscience, which grows upon the confidence of the soul placed in God, as the stalk by which it is united to the Tree. Trusting and staying upon

upon God, is the ſouls caſting its Anchor upon him, in the midſt of the waves and ſtorms of ſin, wrath and trouble. The poor beaten ſinner caſts an Anchor within the Vail, on that ſure ground of immutable Promiſes in Jeſus Chriſt. And then it reſts and quiets it ſelf at that Anchor, enjoyes peace in the midſt of the ſtorm, there is a great calm, it is not moved, or not greatly moved, as if it were a fair day: *David* flieth unto God as his refuge, Anchor's upon the Name of the Lord, *Pſal.* 62. 1, 2. And ſo he enjoys a perfect calm and tranquillity, *I ſhall not be moved*, becauſe he is united to the Rock, he is tyed to the firm Foundation Jeſus Chriſt, and no ſtorm can diſſolve this Union; not becauſe of the ſtrength of that Rope of Faith, it is but a weak Cord, if Omnipotency did not compaſſe it about alſo; And ſo *we are kept by the power of God, through faith unto ſalvation.* The poor wearied Traveller, the Pilgrime ſits down under the ſhadow of a Rock, and this peace is his reſt under it. Faith lays him down, and peace is his reſt and ſleep. Faith in Jeſus Chriſt is a motion towards him, as the ſouls proper place and center; and therefore it is called a coming to him, flying to him as the City of refuge: It is the Souls flight out of it ſelf, and miſery and ſin within, to apprehended Mercy and Grace, and happineſſe in Chriſt. Now Hope is the Conjunction or Union of the Soul with him, the Soul then ſtaying and reſting on him, as in its proper place; And ſo it enjoys perfect peace and reſt in its place:

ſo that if ye remove it thence, then ye offer violence to it.

Theſe two things are of greateſt importance to you to know: What this perfect Peace is, and what is the way to attain it? The one is the Priviledge and Dignity, the other is the Duty of a Chriſtian, and theſe two make him up what he is.

I would think that man perfectly bleſſed, who is at peace with two things, God and himſelf. If a man be at peace with Creatures without him, and be not at peace with himſelf, but have warr within his own Mind, that mans Peace is no Peace, let be perfect peace. *A mans greateſt enemy is within his own houſe.* And within indeed, when it is in his boſome and ſoul: When a mans Conſcience is againſt him, it is worſe then a world beſide. *Conſcientia mille teſtes*, ſo, I ſay, it is *mille boſtes*. It is a thouſand witneſſes, and a thouſand enemies. It were better to endure condemnation of any Judge, of many Judges in the world, then to ſuſtain the conviction of a mans own Conſcience: *When it accuſeth, who ſhall excuſe?* Joh. 8. 9. Rom. 2. 15. *A merry ſpirit* (ſaith *Solomon*) *is a continual feaſt*, Prov. 15. 15. And what muſt a heart be, which hath ſuch a gnawing worm within it, as an accuſing Conſcience, to eat it out? This is the worm of Hell that dies not out, which makes Hell, Hell indeed. This indeed will be a painful Conſumption, *a broken ſpirit dryeth up the bones*, it will eat up the marrow of the ſpirit and body, *Pro.* 17. 22. What infirmity is there which a man cannot bear? Poverty,

verty, Famine, Warr, Peſtilence, Sickneſs, name what you will, but a wounded Spirit who can bear? *Prov.* 18. 14. And there is reaſon for it, for there is none to bear it: A ſound and whole Spirit can ſuſtain infirmities, but when that is wounded, which ſhould bear all the reſt, what is behind to bear it? It is a burden to it ſelf: If a man have trouble and warr in this world, yet there is often eſcaping from it; A man may fly from his enemy, but when thy enemy is within thee, whither ſhall thou fly? Thou cannot go from thy ſelf, thou carries about thee thy enemy, thy tormenter.

But ſuppoſe a man were at peace within himſelf, and cryed peace, peace to himſelf, yet if he be not at peace with God, ſhall his peace be called peace? Shall it not rather be named ſupine ſecurity? If a man be at variance with himſelf, and his Soul diſquieted within, there is more fear then danger, if he be at peace with God; It is but a falſe Alarme, that ſhall end well: But if he have peace in his own boſom, and yet no agreement with God; then deſtructions are certainly coming, his dream of peace will have a terrible wakening. A man may ſleep ſoundly, and his enemies round about him, becauſe he knoweth not of it; but he is in a worſe eſtate, nor he that is in great fear, and his enemies either none, or far diſtant: The one hath preſent danger, and no fear; the other preſent fear, and no danger, and which of theſe think ye beſt? Sudden deſtruction awakes the one from ſleep, *Ezek.* 7. 25. Their

fear and destruction come both at once, when it is now in vain to fear, because it is past Hope, *Prov.* 1. 27. Therefore the Lord swears, that *there is no peace to the wicked*, Isai. 48. 22. What? Do not they often cry peace to themselves, and put the evil day far off? No men are so without Bands in life and death as they, they have made agreement with Hell and Death and their own Consciences; Yet for all that, *Thus saith the Lord, there is no peace to the wicked.* If God be against us, what is the matter who be with us; For he can make a mans friends his enemies, and he can make a mans enemies to be at peace with him: *He makes peace and creates trouble*, Isai. 45. 7. Men can but destroy the body, but he can destroy both body and soul for ever. O what a Potent and Everlasting Enemy is he? There is no escaping from his All-seeing Eye, and powerful Hand, *Psal.* 139. 7, 8. A man may fly from men, but whither shall he fly from his Presence? To Heaven? He is there: To Hell? He is there. The darkness of the night hath been a covering under which many have escaped, and been saved in Armies, but darkness is no covering to him, it is all one with Light; He is near hand every one of us: The Conscience is within us, but he is within the Conscience; And how much God is above the Creature, so great and dreadful a party is he above any enemy imaginable. Therefore I conclude, that that man only hath perfect peace who is at peace with God, and with his own Conscience. If a man be at peace with God, and not with himself, he wants but

a moments time of perfect peace ; for, or it be long, the God of it will speak Peace unto him. But if he be at peace with God and himself, I know not what he wants of the perfect peace, of the *Peace*, *Peace* : For it is a mans Mind that makes peace or warr, it is not outward things ; but in the midst of peace, he may be in trouble, and in the midst of trouble, in peace, according as he hath satisfaction and contentment in his own breast : For what is all the Grace of a Christian ? It is Godlinesse with Contentment : It is not Godliness and Riches, Godliness and Honour, or Pleasure, Godliness and outward Peace. No, no, Contentment compenseth all these, and hath in it eminently, all the gain and advantage of these. A man in Honour, a Rich man, having no contentment in it, is really als poor, als ignominious, as the poor and despised man. If Contentment then be without these things, certainly they cannot be missed ; For where Contentment is not with them, it only is missed, and they not considered. Contentment is all the Gain that men seek in Riches and Honour and Pleasure ; If a Godly man have that same without them, he then hath all the Gain and Advantage, and wants nothing, but some trouble that ordinarly attends them : Outward Peace cannot add to inward peace, and so the want of it, cannot diminish.

We must begin at the Original, if we would know rightly this peace that passeth knowledge. The Fountain-head is peace with God ; a stream of this, is peace of Conscience,

and peace with the Creatures. There is a peace of friendſhip, when perſons were never enemies, and there is a peace of Reconciliation when parties at variance are made one. Innocent *Adam* had peace once with God as a friend Angels continue ſo to this day ; but now there is no ſuch peace between men and God, for *all are become enemies to God, and aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael.* That peace was broken by rebellion againſt God his Maker, and all the poſterity are born with the ſame enimity againſt God : On our part *are hearts deſperatly wicked, whoſe imagination is only evil continually* : One Gods part *is holy and ſpotleſs Juſtice, that is of purer eyes then to behold iniquity,* and therefore, muſt deſtroy it or the ſinner. On our part are ſo many rebellions, *Adams* actual tranſgreſſion, and all our own ſins and breaches of the holy Law, as ſo many breaches of peace. On Gods part, are ſo many Curſes anſwerable to the breaches of the Law : *Curſed is every one that abideth not in every thing,* &c. This Curſe is even the proclamation of men to be traitors, and an intimation of the righteous Judgment which will come upon them. *Adam* was in a Covenant of peace with God, *Do, and thou ſhalt live, if not, thou ſhalt die. Adam* brake this Covenant, ſo the peace is diſſolved, and God is no more oblidged to give Life, but to execute the pain contained in the Covenant : And in ſigne and token of this , look how *Adam* fled from Gods preſence, to hide himſelf when he heard his Voice, it was a poor ſhift, *for whither ſhould he go from his preſence?* But alas, ſeeking mor

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Wisdom, he lost that he had, seeking Divine Wisdom, he lost Humane. Now there is no more making up this peace on such termes again: We have no capacity to treat with God any more. But blessed be his Majesty, who hath found out the way of Agreement and Reconciliation. Oh that ye were once perswaded of your enimity against God: Ye are not born friends, though ye be born within the Visible Church. How dreadful a thing is it, to have the most High and Terrible God against you, to do to you according to your deservings. Ye all know this, we are enemies to God by Nature, I pray you, is it but a name? Is it not worthy deep consideration? But who considereth this matter? If ye lose a friend, ye will be troubled, and the more behoveful your friend was, the more troubled you will be. If a great and potent Nation proclaimed Warr against us, we cannot but be sensible of it: But alas, who considereth the great breach that is between God and all Men, occasioned by the first mans transgression and rebellion. It is one of the degrees of health, to know the disease, and I may call it a degree of peace, a kind of preparation to peace, to know the enimity, and not generally to know it, but to ponder it till the heart be affected with it; To call a Council of all the Faculties and Affections of the Soul, to consider the great imminent danger of mans commonwealth. What is it, I pray you, that is the greatest obstruction of mens making peace with God, that makes the breach irreparable, and the wound incurable? It is this, certainly;

No man apprehendeth it aright; We intertain good thoughts of our friendſhip with God, or that it is eaſy to be reconciled. Who ſeeth ſuch a wide breach between God and man, that all the Merits of Angels and Men could not make it up? Who ſeeth the price of Redemption ſo precious, as it muſt ceaſe for ever, for all that Men and Angels can do? Is not every man offering God ſatisfaction, either his Tears, or ſorrow, or amendment in time coming, or all of them? Do not men undertake to pacify God with External Ordinances, and think it may ſuffice for their ſins? Certainly ye are ignorant, of the infinite ſeparation between God and man, that imagines a Treaty with him your ſelf, or that ever ye can come in ſpeaking termes. And therefore is this Warr and Enimity perpetual; therefore, there is no peace, when ye cry peace, peace. When ye have peace within you, and ſay that ye have peace with God; Yet certainly, *the Lord thy God is againſt thee, and will not ſpare thee*, Deut. 29. 19. Many of you bleſſe your ſelves in your own hearts; when ye hear the Curſe and Threatning of the Law, ye ſay, God forbid, or all that were true. Well, thus ſaith the Lord, all theſe Curſes that are written in this book, ſhall ly upon thee, and the Lord ſhall ſeparate thee unto evil, becauſe ye take not with your enimity, there can be no treaty, a Mediator can have no imployment from you.

How ſhall the breach of peace be made up? Since the firſt Covenant cannot be made up again where ſhall the remedy be found? God is juſt and

and righteous, Men are rebellious and sinful; Can these meet, and the one not be consumed? Will not God be a consuming Fire, and men as Stubble before the Lords presence? Therefore, there must be a Mediator between them, a Peace-maker, to make of two, one, to take up the difference. And this Mediator must be like both, and yet neither wholly the one, nor the other. He must therefore be God and Man, that he may be a fit Days man, betwixt God and man. And this is our *Lord Jesus Christ*. In his Divinity, he comes near to God, in his Humanity he comes near to man; In his Person, he is between both, and he is fit to make peace; And therefore, he is *a Prince of Peace*, Isa. 9. 6. And that he may be a Prince of Peace, he must be both *An Everlasting Father* like God, and a young Child like unto man: God to prevail with God, and a man to engage for man; And therefore he is called *our Peace*, Eph. 2. 14. Our Lord Jesus Christ enters in a Covenant with the Father, wherein he undertakes to bear our Curse, and the chastisement of our Peace; he is content to be dealt with as the Rebel, *upon me, upon me be the iniquity*, and so there comes an interruption, as it were; of that blessed peace he had with the Father, he is content that there should be a Covering of Wrath, spread over the Fathers Love, that he should handle the Son as an Enemy; And therefore it is, that sinners are admitted as Friends, his Obedience takes away our Rebellion; The Cloud of the Lords Displeasure powers down upon him, that it might be fair weather to us: The Armies

of Curſes that were againſt us. Encounter him, and he by being overcome, overcometh; By being ſlain by Juſtice, Satan and Sin, overcometh all thoſe, *and killeth the enmity on the croſs, making peace by his Blood*, Col. 2. 14, 15 Eph. 2 15. And it is this Sacrifice that hath pacified Heaven, the ſweet ſmell of it hath gone above, and made peace in the High places.

Here then is the priviledge of a Believer, to be at peace with God, to be one with him: And this indeed is Life Eternal, to be united unto the Fountain of Life, in whoſe favour is Life, and whoſe loving kindneſſe is better then Life: Is not this a bleſſed Eſtate? Whatever a man hath done againſt God, it is all forgiven and forgotten, ſhall never come in remembrance. Are not Angels bleſſed who are friends with God? Such is the Soul whoſe ſins are pardoned through Chriſt, their ſins are as if they never had been; The Soul is not only eſcaped that terrible wrath of God, but being at peace with God, all the goodneſſe that is communicable to Creatures, it ſhall partake of. *That they may be one, as we are one, that they may be perfect in one*, Joh. 17. This Chriſt prayed for, and this was the end of his Death, to make of two, one; So then, the Glory that Chriſt is partaker of with the Father, we muſt be partakers of with him, and all this, by vertue of that peace with God by him. Oh if ye knew what enimity with God is, how would it indear and make precious peace with him? The one engageth all that is in God, to be againſt a man: the other en-

engageth all that is in him, to be for a man. And is not he then a great One, whither he be a Friend or an Enemy? Is he not the best Friend and worst Enemy? Who hath most power, yea, all power to employ for whom he will, and against whom he will. What a blessed change is it, to have God, of a consuming Fire, made a Sun, with Healing and Consolation? That the Righteous, Holy and Just God, before whom, no flesh can stand, should accept so rebellious sinners, and dwell among them. He had not only power to destroy, but Law against us also: What a perfect peace is it then, that the Judge becometh a merciful Father, and the Law of Ordinances is cancelled, and that power imployed to keep Salvation to us, and us to Salvation. Ye who have made Peace and Atonement through Christs Blood, rejoyce in the Hope of the Glory of God; There wants nothing to make you compleatly blessed, but the clear and perfect sight, and knowledge of your Estate before God.

Now when this peace, which is made up in Heaven is intimated unto the Conscience, then all the Tempests and Clouds of it evanish, and this is the peace of believing, which is the Souls resting and quieting it self upon the believed favour of God. There may be a great Calm above, *goodwill in God tomards men*, and yet great Tempests in this lower Region, *no peace on earth*. There is a peace of Conscience, which is a disease of Conscience, a benumednesse of Conscience, or a sleep of Conscience, when

when men walk in the imagination of their own hearts, and flatter themſelves in their own eyes, will not trouble themſelves with the apprehenſion of the wrath of God, when Souls will not ſuffer their ſin, or the curſe to enter in. This is that *no peace*, which the Lord ſpeaks often of, it is but a dream, and when a man awaketh, alas, what a dreadful ſight meets he with firſt, *ſudden deſtruction*; Sin enters in the Conſcience, and the Law, the ſtrength of ſin, and ſo that peace endeth in an eternal diſquietneſſe. But what is the reaſon, that notwithſtanding of Gods Juſtice and mens Sins, ſo many are not affraid of him, ſo many paſſe the time, without fear of Wrath and Hell? *Is* it not becauſe they have taken hold of his Strength and made peace with him? No indeed, but becauſe they know not the power of his Anger, to fear him according to his Wrath: Who will ſpend one hour in the examination of his own ways, in ſearching out ſins, in counting his debt, till he find it paſt payment? No, men intertain the thoughts of ſin, and hell and wrath, as if it were coals in their boſom, they ſhake them out, they like and love any diverſion from them. Oh, ignorance maketh much peace, I would ſay, ſecurity, which is ſo much worſe then fear, becauſe it is ſo far from the remedy, that it knoweth not the evil and danger. It is not the riſing of the Sun of Righteouſneſſe, ſhining into the Soul, that hath cleared them: but their perpetual darkneſſe that blindeth them. I ſay then, in the Name of Jeſus Chriſt, that ye never knew

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the peace of God, who knew not warr with God : Ye know not love, who have not known anger. But this is the Souls true peace and tranquillity, when it is once awakened to see its misery and danger; How many Clouds overspread it, what Tempests blow, what Waves of Displeasure go over its head? But when that peace, which is made in the High Places, breaketh thorow the Cloud with a Voice, *Son, be of good comfort, thy sins be forgiven thee,* when that Voice of the Spirit is uttered, presently at its command the Wind and Waves obey; the Soul is calmed as the Sea after a Storm; It is not only untroubled, but it is peaceable upon solid grounds, because of the word which speaks peace in Christ. The peace of the most of you, is such as ye were born and Educated withal: It is not a created peace, a spoken peace, the fruit of the lips, and so no true peace. Ye had not your peace from the word, but ye brought it to the word; Ye have no peace after trouble, and so it is not the Lords peace.

The Christian may have peace, in regard of his own salvation and eternal things, and in regard of all things that befalleth in time: The first is, when the Conscience is sprinkled with the Blood of Jesus Christ, and getteth a good answer to all the challenges and accusations of Conscience, and of the Law and Justice, 1 *Pet.* 3. 21. when the Spirit of God shines into the Soul, with a new Light to discover these things that are freely given, 1 *Cor.* 2. 12. And this is the Sealing of the Spirit, after believing,

Eph.

Eph. 1. 13. When a Soul hath put to its Seal by believing Gods word, and hath acknowledged Gods Truth and Faithfulneſſe in his word, the Spirit Sealeth mutually the Believers Faith, both by more Holineſſe, and the knowledge of it. And how great peace is this, when a Soul can look upon all its iniquities, when they compaſſe about a man, and outward trouble ſharpeneth and ſetteth on edge inward challenges, and yet the Soul will not fear, it hath anſwers to them all in Chriſts Blood, *Pſal.* 49. 5. This is a greater word then all the world can ſay. Many mens fearleſneſſe proceedeth from ignorance of ſin, their iniquities were never ſet in order before them, but if once they compaſſed them about, and wrath like a fiery wall compaſſe them about alſo, ſo that there were no eſcaping: Oh it would be more terrible; then all the Armies of the world; Ye would account little of a Kingdom, ye would exchange it for ſuch a word as *David* hath upon good grounds.

Now I ſay again, the Soul that hath thus committed it ſelf to him as a faithful keeper, may have peace in all Eſtates and Conditions: And this peace floweth from that other peace. There is a peace which guards the heart and mind, *Phil.* 4. 6, 7. Oppoſed to carefulneſſe and anxiety, and this *Paul* is Examplar for, *I have learned in every eſtate, therewith to be content, to want and abound*, &c. *verſ.* 11. The Soul of a Believer, may be in an equal even Tenur and Diſpoſition in all conditions; It may poſſeſſe it ſelf in patience; Impatience and

and Anxiety, makes a man not his own man, he is not himself, he injoys not himself, he is a burden to himself, and is his own tormenter. But if Souls were stayed upon God, certainly they would possesse themselves, dwell securely within their own breasts. We may find that the most part of men, are exposed to all the floods and waves of the times: They move inwardly, as things are troubled outwardly: Every thing addeth moment to their grief, or joy: Any Dispensation casteth the Ballance, and either weights them down with discouragement, or lifteth them up with vanity and lightnesse of mind. But the Believers priviledge is to be unmoved in the midst of all the Tossings and Confusions of the times, *Psal.* 128. 1, 2. Ye would *be as Mount Zion, if ye trusted in God*; No Dispensation should enter into the Soul, to cast the Ballance upon you; Ye might stand upon your Rock Jesus Christ, and look about the Estates, Persons, Affairs and Minds of men, as a troubled Sea, fleeting, tossed up and down, and ye stand *and not be moved, or not greatly moved*, Ps. 62. 2. And this is to be wise indeed. If I would describe a wise man, I would say, he *is one man*, beside him, no man is one with himself, but various inconstant, changeable. He is unwise, who is unlike himself, who changeth Persons according to Dispensations: Wisdom is the stability of thy times, and Faith is Wisdom, it Establisheth as Mount Zion, so as a man cometh out still one, in prosperity not exalted, in adversity not cast down, in every Estate content: and this

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is the man who is bleſſed indeed. This were to wiſdom, to will the ſame thing, and nill the ſame thing, *Semper idem velle, atque idem nolle.* I need not (ſaith *Seneca*) add that exception, that it be right which you deſire, for no one thing can univerſally and always pleaſe, if it be not good and right. So I ſay, he were both wiſe and happy, who had but one grief, and one joy. Should not a Believers mind be calm and ſerene, ſeing the true Light hath ſhined, it ſhould be as the upper world, where no blaſts, no ſtorms or clouds are to ecclips the Sun, or cloud it. while our peace and tranquillity is borrowed from outward things, certainly it muſt change; But a Believers peace and tranquillity of mind having its riſe from above, from the unchangeable word of the Lord, it needeth not to change according to the viciſſitudes of Providence. He needeth not to care before hand, becauſe there is one who careth for him; And what needeth both to care? He needeth not be diſquieted, or troubled after, becauſe it ſhall turn about to his good; *All things ſhall do ſo*, Rom. 8. 28 He needeth not be Anxious about future Events, becauſe he hath all his burden caſt upon another, by prayer and ſupplication; What needeth he then take a needleſſe burden? Prayer will do that, which Care pretends and cannot do, and that without trouble. He needeth not be troubled when things are preſent, for he cannot by his thought, either add or diminiſh, take away or prevent. There is one good and neceſſary thing, that his heart is upon, and that cannot be

were taken from him; And therefore, all things
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l be arms of External things. May not all the
in- world be troubled about him; What though
no the Floods lift up their Voice, if they come not
the into the Soul? If he be one and the same in
n- Peace and Trouble, Prosperity and Adversity,
r- do not lament him in the one more then the o-
ce ther. It is the Mind that maketh your Condi-
- tion good or bad. But yet, I say, the Beliey-
d, er hath likewise peace with all the Creatures,
- which the world hath not, and even in this he
e is a privileged man. *He is in league with the*
n *stones of the field, and in peace in his tabernacle,*
Job. 5. 23. *All things are his, because he is Christs,*
and all are Christs, who is the possessor of Hea-
ven and Earth, at least the Righteous Heir of
both, 1 *Cor.* 3. 21. The Unbeliever hath no
right to the Creature; Though there be a
Cessation for a time, between them and him,
yet that is no peace, for they will at length be
armed against him, they are witnesses already
against him, and groan to God for the corrup-
tion, that mans sin hath subjected them un-
to. His Table is, it may be, full, yet it is a snare
unto him: He getteth ease and quietnesse
outwardly: Nay, but it slayeth the fool

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and destroyeth him. But the godly ma
is at peace thorow Christs Blood, with a
Crosses and Comforts ; The Sting and E
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Poverty is made a friend , because Chri
was poor. Hunger and Thirst is becom
a friend, because Christ was hungry and thi
sty : Reproach and Contempt is at pea
with him, because Christ was despised : A
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quainted with griefs : In a word Death
self is become a friend, since Christ subdu
ed it, by tasting of it. I may say, the wor
things to a Natural man , are become be
friends to the Believer ; The Grave keep
eth his Body and dust in Hope : Death is
better friend then Life, for it ministers an en
try into Glory : It is the Door of Eter
nall Life , it taketh down the Tabernacl
of Mortality , that we may be Cloathed
upon with immortality. In Summe, what
ever it be , Christ hath stamped a new
quality on it , it cometh through his hand,
and so , if it be not good in it self , yet
it is good in the use , and in his appoint
ment , *Rom.* 8. 21. If it be not good,
yet it worketh together for our good : It
contributeth to our good , because it is in
his Skilfull Hand , who can bring good out
of evill , peace out of trouble. Oh that
ye were perswaded to be Christians indeed,
to love his Law , and trust in him , great

peace

eace have all ſuch : This were more to ou , nor peace in the world : Your peace hould be as a River , for abundance and erpetuity , no drought could dry it up ; t ſhould run in time as a large River, and when time is done , it would emboſome it elf in Eternity , in that Ocean of eternall peace, and joy which the Saints are drown-ed in above : Other mens peace is but like a Brook that dries up in Summer.

SER-

SERMON XIII.

Isai. 26. 3. *Thou shalt keep him in perfect Peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.*

CHrist hath left us his peace, as the great and comprehensive Legacy, *My peace I leave you*, Joh. 14. 27. And this was not peace in the world that he injoyed, you know what his life was, a continual warfare; but a peace above the world, that passeth understanding. *In the world you shall have trouble, but in me you shall have peace*, saith Christ, a peace that shall make trouble no trouble: You must lay your accompts to have such a life, as the Forerunner had; But withall, as he hath left us his trouble, so hath he left us his peace; The trouble will have an end, but the joy can no man take from you: We have this sure Promise to rest upon, in behalf of the Church, *peace shall be on Israel*; A peace that the world knoweth not, and so cannot assault it, or take it away. Oh that you would hearken to this word, *That you would trust in the Lord, and stay upon your God, then should your peace be as a River*, Isai. 48. 18. There is nothing more desired in time of trouble, then peace; but all peace

not better then warr : Some neceſſary warr better, then evil grounded peace. The Kingdomes have been long in pain, labouring to bring forth a ſafe and well-grounded peace. But alas, we have been in pain and brought forth wind, when we looked for peace, no good came: and for healing, behold trouble. But how ſhall we arrive at our deſired Haven? Certainly, if peace be well grounded, it muſt have Truth for its Foundation, and Righteouſneſſe for its Companion; *Truth muſt ſpring out of the earth, and righteouſneſs look down from heaven.* This were the compendious way for publick peace, if every man would make his own peace with God: There are controverſies with God, between King, Nobles and People, and therefore, God Fomenteth the warrs in the Kingdoms; If you would have theſe ended, make peace with God in Chriſt, by flying in unto him, and reſting on him; more truſting in God would diſpatch our warrs; Truſting in the arm of fleſh continueth them. Allways what ever be, peace or warr, here is the buſineſſe that more concerns you, your eternal peace and ſafty; And if ye were more careful of this, to ſave your own Souls, you would help the publick more. If you could be once perſwaded to be Chriſtians indeed, we needed not preſſe many duties in reference to the publick, and untill you be once perſwaded to ſave your ſelves, by flying from the wrath to come, it is in vain to ſpeak of publick Duties to you. We do therefore, declare unto you the way of obtaining perfect peace,

peace

peace as a River, if you will quite all ſelf-confidences, fly from your ſelves as your greateſt enemies, and truſt your Souls unto the Promiſe in Jeſus Chriſt, and lean all your weight on him, we aſſure you, your peace ſhall run abundantly and perpetually. whoever truſteth in Creatures, in uncertain Riches, in worldly peace, in whatſoever thing, beſide the only living and glorious Lord, we perſwade him, that his peace ſhall fail as a Brook: All things in this world ſhall deal deceitfully with you, as a Brook which is black-ſh, by reaſon of Ice, what time it waxeth warm, it ſhall evaniſh; you that looked and waited for water in it ſhall be confounded, becauſe you hoped and are aſhamed becauſe of your expectation, *Job 6. 15. &c.* The Summer ſhall dry up your peace, and what will you do? But if you pour out your Souls on him, and truſt in the Fountain of Living Waters, you ſhall not be aſhamed, for your peace ſhall be as a River. The Elephant is ſaid to truſt, that he can drink out a River, but he is deceived, for he may drink again, it runs, and ſhall run for ever. If any thing would eſſay to take your peace from you, it is a vain attempt, for it runs like a River; it may be ſhallower and deeper, but it cannot run dry, becauſe of the Living Fountain it proceedeth from. There is no other thing can be made ſure, all beſides this, is uncertain, and this only is worthy to be made ſure; Nothing beſides this, can give you ſatisfaction.

Are your hearts asking within you, how ſhall this peace be attained? If you deſire to know

know it, consider these words, *whose heart is stayed on thee, because he trusts in thee.* It concerneth you much to know well, what this is, that your eternal peace depends on.

Trusting in God, is the leaning of the Souls weight on God, the Soul hath a burden above it, heavy and unsupportable, and this the truster casteth upon God; And so *he is a loadened and weary man, whom Christ exhorteth to come to him, and he shall find ease for his Soul,* Matth. 11. 28. Prov. 3. 5. Leaning to our self, and trusting in God are opposed. *Psal.* 22. 10. Trusting is exponed, to be *a casting upon God*, Psal. 25. 1. It is called, *a lifting up the Soul to him.* This one thing is included, in the bosome of Trusting and Believing, that a man hath many burdens, too heavy for him, which would sink him down: The Believer is such a one as *Jehosaphat*, 2 Chron. 20. 12. *O Lord we have no might against this great company, neither know we what to do.* O Lord, I have an Army of iniquities against me, a great company compasseth me about; An Army of Curses, als numerous as mine iniquities, both are innumerable as the Sand of the Sea, I have no might against them, neither know I what to do: Nay, the Lord is against me, his wrath is like the roaring of a Lyon, what can I do against him? The first beginning of trusting in God, is distrusting our selves: And untill a man see his duty and burden beyond his strength, his burden greater then he can bear, you will never perswade him to come to Jesus Christ,

Christ, and lean on him. We will not preach any such Doctrine, as to discharge any to come to Christ, till they be wearied and loaden; For, when a man conceiveth that he wanteth that weariednesse, whither shall he go to find it? Is there any Fountain, but one Jesus Christ, both of Grace and preparations to it, if any such be? But this we preach unto you, that until you be wearied and loaden, you will not cast your burden on Jesus. We need not discharge you to come till you be such, for certainly you will not come. This is the desperat wickednesse of our hearts, that we will never forsake our selves, till we can do no better: Un till men be as *David, I looked on the right hand, and there was none would know me*, refuge failed me, certainly they will not cry to God: Men will look round about them, before they will look up above them, they will cast the burden of their Souls upon any thing, upon their own sorrow and contrition, upon their resolution to amend, upon external Duties and Priviledges, upon civil Honesty, until all these succumb under the weight of their Salvation, and then, it may be, they will ask after him who bare our griefs. I would not willingly speak of preparations to Faith, because it putteth men upon searching something in themselves, upon fashioning their own hearts, and trimming them to come to Christ; wheras there is nothing can be acceptable to him, but what cometh from him. But I think all that men intend, who speak of preparations, may be gained this way, by holding out unto men, the impossibility of com-

coming to Christ, till they be emptied of themselves; Not that the one is a thing going before, to be done by us, but because they are all one, it is one motion of the Soul to come out of it self, and in to Jesus: It is one thing really to distrust our selves, and to trust in him; And by this means, when the true Nature of Faith it self is holden out, men might examine themselves rather by it, whither they have it, nor by the preparations of it.

But to come to our purpose, when the Soul is pressed under burdens of sin and misery, of duty, and insufficiency, and inability to do it, then the Gospel discovereth unto the wearied Soul, a place of reposing and rest. The Lord hath established *Christ Jesus an ensigne to the people*, these who seek unto him shall find *his rest glorious*, Isa. 11. 10. When there is discovered in us, all emptinesse and inability, yea impossibility to save our selves or perform any duty, then are we led to Jesus Christ, as one who is come with *grace and truth, in whom it hath pleased the father all fulnesse should dwell*; And the turning of the Soul over upon him, is trusting in him. You would not mistake this, trusting in the Lord in its first and most native acting, is not always perswasion of his good-will and love in particular; No, the Soul meets first with a general promise, holding out his good-will in general, and the Soul closeth with this, a thing both good and true, *as faithful in it self, and worthy of all acceptation*. This is it that we must first meet with, an all-sufficient Saviour able to save to the utmost all that come to him, and the Souls accepting of that blessed Saviour on the termes

he is offered; this is believing in him, and trusting to him, as a compleat Saviour.

Now when the Soul hath disburdened it self upon God, and set to its seal to the truth of the promises in the Gospel for Salvation; If the Light of the Spirit shine to discover this unto it, that it hath laid hold on *his strength*, *who is able to save to the utmost*, then it becometh perswaded of his love in particular, and this is rather the Sealing after believing, then believing it self.

When once men have hazarded their Souls upon his word, and trusted in him, then they may trust in him for all particulars: *He that hath given his Son for us, will he not with him give all things*: This therefore, is the continual recourse of a Believer, from discovered emptinesse and insufficiency in himself, to travel unto the fulnesse and strength of Jesus Christ, that his strength may be perfected in weakneſſe: Yea when all things seem contrary, and his dispensation writes bitter things against us, yet ought we to trust in him, *Job* 13. 15. There is a peaceable of wilfulnes and violence in Faith, that will look all ways towards his word, whatever be threatned to the contrary.

Now from this Faith in God, floweth a constant dependance and stayednes on him, *They are stayed on him, because they trusted in him*: For Faith discovereth in God, such grounds, that it may lean its weight upon him without wavering and changing. It considereth his power, his good-will and his faithfulnes; He is able

able to perform, he is willing to do it, and he is faithful, because he hath promised. His greatness and power is a high Rock, higher then we, that Faith leadeth us unto: His love and good will in Jesus Christ, maketh an open entry, and ready access to that Rock; And faithfulness ingageth both to give a shelter and refuge to the poor sinner. Would a Soul be any more tossed, would there be any place for wavering and doubting, if Souls considered his excellent loveing kindness and great goodness laid up and treasured with him, for these that trust in him? *Psal.* 36.7. Who would not put their trust under the shadow of his wings, and think themselves safe? Again, if his eternal power were pondered, how he is able to effectuat whatever he pleaseth, what everlasting Armes he hath, that by a word supports the frame of the world, what he can do, if he stretch out his Arm: And then, if these two immutable things, *Heb.* 6. 18. His Promise and his Oath were looked upon, how he hath ingaged himself in his Truth, and sworn in his Holiness; Would not a Soul ly safely between these three? What strong consolation would such a threefold consideration yield? Would any wind or tempest blow within these Walls mounted up to Heaven?

Stayedness on God is nothing else, but the fixedness of believing and trusting. *Psal.* 112. 7, 8. *His heart is fixed, trusting in God, his heart is stablished.* It is even the mature and perfect age of Faith: Faith while it is yet in infancy, in its tender years, it neither can endure storms, nor

can it confirm us in them ; But when it hath ſprung up and grown in that root of Jeſſe, when it is rooted and eſtabliſhed in Jeſus Chriſt, then it eſtabliſheth the Soul : Faith abiding in him and taking root groweth confirmed , as a Tree that cannot eaſily be moved , and if you eſtabliſh Faith , you ſhall be eſtabliſhed.

There are two particulars which I conceive the truſting Soul is ſtayed on , Firſt , in the meditation of God , Secondly , in expectation from him of all good things. When I ſay the Meditation of God , *I* take in both Contemplation and Affection. The moſt part of men have but few thoughts of God at all, even thoſe who truſt in him , do not conſider ſufficiently , what a One he is in whom they believe. If Faith were vigorous and lively, it would put men to often thinking on him, ſeeking to know him in his glorious Names , the mind would be ſtayed upon this glorious object , as the moſt Myſterious and Wonderful One. How throng are mens minds with their vanities ? *When they awake , they are not ſtill with God* ; The Meditation of him is a burden to them ; Any other thing geteth more time and thoughts. But Meditation addeth Affection to Contemplation ; Men may think long upon the Heavens and their Courſe , but their Affections are not raviſhed with them : But this is the Soul ſtayed on God , when the Souls deſires are towards the remembrance of his Name , then Affection ſtayeth the mind upon what it pitcheth one : And certainly

the mind giveth but passing looks, constrained thoughts where the heart is not: Here is *Davids* Meditation, *Psal.* 1. *My delight is in the law of the Lord.* The Soul of a Believer should be constant and fixed in the consideration of God, till he be wholly ingaged to admiration and wondering. *O Lord how excellent is thy Name*, Ps. 8. 1. *And who is like unto thee?* You all say that you believe in God, and know his Power, you know he is Good, he is Merciful, Just, Longsuffering, Faithful, *&c.* But what is all this knowledge but ignorance, and your light darkness, when it doth not press you to put your trust in his Name? You know; Nay, but you consider not what you know: This is trusting, when the mind is stayed on what it knoweth, when all the scattered thoughts and affections are called home, and united in one, to be exercised about this comprehensive Object, *The Lord our God.* It is not want of knowledge destroyeth you, but want of consideration of what you know, and this is brutishness. Mens hearts do not carry Seal and Stamp of their knowledge, because thoughts of God and his word are but as passengers that go thorow a Land, as lightning going thorow the mind, but warms it not: And so their practice carrieth no impression of it either. How base is it for those who have God for their God, to be so ignorant of him. Would not any man willingly travel about his own possessions. Have you such a large portion Believers, and should you be taken up with other vanities? Should your hearts & minds be stayed on them more then

the living God ? There is a great vanity and levity in mens minds. *The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men that they are vanity.* There is an unsetledness of Spirit, we cannot pitch upon that on which we may be stayed : And so all the spirits of men are in a continual motion from one thing to another , for nothing giveth compleat satisfaction, and therefore it must go and try on after another , to see if it can find in it , what it found not in the former : And such is the inconstancy of the Spirit, that it licketh up its vomit and what thing it refused , it eateth it up as its meat : The time is spent in choosing and refusing, rejecting one thing, and taking another and again returning to what you have rejected. Thus are men tossed up and down, and unstable in all their ways, as a Ship without ballasting. Now Faith and trusting in God is the ballast and weight of this inconstant Ship : It is the Anchor to stay it from being driven to and fro. If once men would pitch upon this one Lord, who hath in himself eminently all the scattered perfections of Creatures, and infinitely more, if you would consider him, and meditate on him, till your Souls loved him, would you not be ravished with him ? Would you not build your house beside him , and dwell in the meditation of his Name ? This would fix and establish you in duties, *When I awake , I am still with thee.* A little searching and experience discovereth emptiness in all beside, and therefore is it, that the Soul removeth sooner from such a particular Creature then it expected ; but here is *one that is past finding out* ; The more I search and find, I find him

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the more above what I can ſearch and find. The Creatures are but painted and fair in mens apprehenſion and at a diſtance, but the neare injoyment of them diſcovereth the deluſion, and ſendeth a man away aſhamed, becauſe he truſted. But the Lord God is, and there is no other, he is not as waters that fail, no liar, he is an everlaſting Fountain, the more you dig and draw, it runs the faſter, he will never ſend any away aſhamed that truſt in him, becauſe they ſhall find more then they expected.

Therefore the Soul that is ſtayed on meditation of God, and knoweth him certainly, will be fixed in expectation from him. Our expectation from the Creatures changeth, becauſe it is oft fruſtrat, diſappoyntment meets it, it is above what is in the Creature, and ſo it muſt meet with diſappoyntment; But as he is above our meditation, ſo is he far above our expectation: And if a mans experience anſwer his hope, he hath no reaſon to change his hope. The Lord hath often done things we looked not for, but we never looked for any thing according to the grounds of the word, but it was done, or a better then it. He doth not always anſwer our limitations, but if he give Gold, when we ſought Silver, are we not anſwered? Are we diſappoynted? There are three things that uſe moſt to diſquiet and toſs mens ſpirits, ſin and wrath, future events, and preſent calamities: Faith eſtabliſheth the Soul on God in all theſe, and ſuffereth it not to be driven to and fro, with theſe winds; It finds a harbour and refuge in God from all theſe. If he be purſued by the avenger of blood, Gods

Wrath and Juſtice, here is an open City of Refuge that he may run to, and be ſafe. If iniquities compaſs me about, yet I will not fear, but oppoſe unto that great company, the many ſufferings and obedience of Jeſus Chriſt. My conſcience challengeth and writteth bitter things againſt me, yet I have an anſwer *in that blood that ſpeaketh better things nor Abels.* If ſinns prevail, he will purge them away: His Mercy is above all my ſin, and his Vertue and Power is above my ſin, *He hath promiſed and will he not do it?* Oftimes mens Souls are perplexed and toſſed about future Events, careful for to morrow; this is a great torment of ſpirit, it cutteth and divideth it, putteth a man to his own providence as if there were no God. But he that truſteth in God, is eſtabliſhed in this, *his heart is fixed, truſting in the Lord*, he hath commited his Soul to him, and why may he not his body? He hath nothing but his promiſe for eternal Salvation, and may not that ſame ſuffice for temporal? He careth for me (ſaith Faith) why then ſhould we both care about one thing? *He hath given his Son for me*, the moſt precious gift, which the world cannot match, *and will he not with him give all theſe leſſer things?* And thus the Believer incloſeth himſelf within the fathers love and providence, and is fixed, not fearing evil tidings: For what tydings can be evil, ſeing our Father hath the Soveraign diſpoſing of all Affairs, and knoweth what is beſt for us? Preſent diſpenſations often ſhake men and driveth them to and fro; Their feet ſlip, and are not eſtabliſhed, *thou hid thy face, and I was troubled.* But if you truſted in

God,

God, and considered what is in him to oppose to all difficulties and calamities, you would say, *I shall not be moved, though the floods lift up their voice.* If you believed his love, would not this sweeten all his dealing? *He maketh all work together for good.* Soveraignty, Righteousness and Mercy, are sure and firm ground to stand upon in all storms. You may cast Anchor at any of those, and ly secure. *It is the Lord, let him do what he pleaseth.* This was enough to quiet the saints in old times. *Should he give account of his matters to us? Shall the clay say to the potter, why is it thus?* His absolute right by Creation, maketh him beyond all exception, do what he please: But beside this, he is pleased and condescendeth to reason with us, and give account of his matters, to testify to our Conscience, that he is righteous in all his ways. It was the ground of *Jeremiahs* setling, Lam. 3. *It is of the Lords mercy that we are not consumed:* It should have allayed and stayed *Job*, know this, thou art punished lesse then thy iniquities deserve, who will set a time to plead with him? Shall any be found righteous before him? And this might stop all mens mouths, and put them in the dust to keep silence, seing he hath Law to do infinitely more then he doth, why should not we rather proclaim his Clemency, then argue him so very hard? If to both those, you shall add the consideration of his Mercy, that all his paths are Mercy and Truth unto you, even when he correcteth most severely, so that you may blesse him as well for Rods, as for Meat and Cloathing, and count your self blessed when you are taught by the Rod

and the Word; the one ſpeaking to the other, and the other ſealing its inſtruction: If you believed that it were a fruit of his Love, *He chaſteneth every ſon whom he loveth*, that becauſe he will not let you depart from him, will not let you ſettle upon a preſent world, and forget your Country above; therefore he compaſſeth you about with Hedges of Thorns to keep in your way: And therefore he maketh this world bitter and unpleaſant, that you may have no continuing City; If all this were believed, would not the ſoul triumph with *Paul*, *What can ſeparet me from the love of God*, not paſt things, for all my ſins are blotted out, and ſhall be remembered no more; not preſent things, for they work to good, and are a fruit of his Love: not things to come, for that is to come which ſhall more declare his love then what is paſt. Would not a Soul ſleep ſecurely within the compaſs of this Power, this Love, and Faithfulneſs of God, without fear of daſhing or ſinking.

Now judge whither a perfect peace may not flow from all this, may it not be a perfect calm when the Mountains that inviron, go up to Heaven? Not only doth the Soul truſt in God, but God keepeth the truſting Soul in peace. He is the creator of peace, and the preſervator of it, *I creat peace, I keep him in peace*: The ſame power and vertue is required to the preſerving of a thing and the firſt beeing of it. Our Faith and Hope in God, is too weak an Anchor to abide all ſtorms: Our cords would break, our hands faint and weary, but *he is the everlaſting God who faineth not, and wearieth not*, he holdeth an inviſible gri

grip of us, *We are kept by his power to salvation*, and we are kept by his power in peace: *Thy right hand holdeth me*, saith *David*, and this helpeth me to pursue thee. What maketh believers inexpugnable, impregnable, is it their strength? No indeed, *but salvation will God appoynt for walls and bulwarks*: Almighty Power is a strong wall though invisible, this power worketh in us and about us.

Now Believers, pity the world about you, that knoweth not this peace: when they ly secure, and cry peace, peace; Alas, they are a City open without walls as the plain field, there is no keeper there, nothing to hold off destruction. Entertain your own peace, do not grieve the Spirit who hath sealed it: If you return to folly after he hath spoken peace to you, I perswade you, you shall not maintain this peace, there may be peace with God, but no peace in thy Conscience, as long as the whoredoms of thy heart are to the fore: Thou may be secure, but security is worse then fear. Know this, that continuing in a course of sin, entertaining any known sin, shall trouble thy peace. If God have spoken peace to thee, thou shalt not lodge that enemy in peace, *great peace have they that love thy law*. Obedience and delight in it, doth not make peace, but it is the way of peace, and much meditation in the blessed word of God, is the most excellent mean to preserve this peace; if it be secured with much correspondence with Heaven by prayer, *Phil.* 4. 6, 7. If you would disburden your hearts dayly at the Throne of Grace, peace should guard and keep your heart, and

them

then your peace would be perfect indeed. But because your Faith is here imperfect, your requests few and infervent, your follies and iniquities many, therefore is this promised perfection a stranger to the most part of Christians. Always what we want here, we must expect to have made up shortly: Heaven is a Land of peace and all things are there in full age: Here all are in minority, it is but yet night, but when the day shall break up, and the shadows fly away, and the Prince of Peace shall appear and be revealed, he shall bring Peace and Grace both with him, and both perfect. To him be praise and glory.

SER-

SERMON XIV.

Isai. 59. 20. *And the Redeemer shall come unto Sion, to them that turn,* &c.

DOctrines, As things have their Seasons and Times, every thing is beautiful in its Season; So there is no word of Truth, but it hath a Season and Time in which it is beautiful: And indeed that is a great part of Wisdom, to bring forth every thing in its Season, to discern when and where, and to whom it is pertinent, and edifying, to speak such and such Truths. But there is one Doctrine that is never out of Season; And therefore, it may be preached in season and out of season as the Apostle commandeth. Indeed to many hearts it is always out of season, and especially in times of Trouble and Anguish, when it should be most seasonable, when the opportunity may commend the beauty of it; But in it self and to as many as have ever found the power of it on their hearts, it is always the most seasonable and pertinent Doctrine, I mean the very subject matter of this Text; The news of a Redeemer to Captive sinners, it is in it self such glad tidings and shines with so much beauty and splendor to troubled sinners, that it casteth abroad a luster and beauty on the feet of the Mes-

Meſſengers that carry it, *Iſai.* 40. It is a Cordial in Affliction, whither outward or inward; and it is withall the only true comfort of proſperity, it allayeth the bitterneſs of things that croſs us, and filleth up the emptineſſe of things that pretend to pleaſe us. It giveth ſweetneſſe to the one, and true ſweetneſſe to the other. Reaſon then, that ſhould always be welcome to us, which we ſtand always in need of, that it ſhould always be new and freſh in our Affection, which is always recent and new in its Operation and Efficacy toward us. Other news, how great or good ſoever, ſuppoſe they were able to fill the hearts of all in a Nation with Joy, yet they grow ſtale, they loſe their vertue within few days. What footſteps or remainder is of all the Triumphs and Trophies of Nations, of all their Solemnities for their victorious ſucceſſe at home and abroad. Theſe great news, which once were the ſubject of the diſcourſe of, and delight of many thouſands, who report them now with delight; So theſe things that may cauſe Joy and Triumph to ſome at this time, as they cannot chooſe but make more hearts ſad then glad, ſo they will quickly loſe even that Efficacy they have, and become taſteleſs as the white of an Egg to them that are moſt raviſhed with them. But my Beloved, here is glade tydings of a Redeemer come to Sion, to ſave ſinners, which have no occaſion of ſadneſs in them to any, but to them who are not ſo happy as to conſider them or believe them, and they are this day after many hundred, I may ſay thouſand years ſince they were firſt publiſhed, as green

and

and recent, as refreshing to wearied Souls as ever they were; Yea such is the Nature of them, and such an everlasting spring of Consolation is in them, that the oftner they be told and the more they be considered the sweeter they are, they grow green in old age, and bring forth fruit, and are fat and flowrishing, and indeed it is the never dying vertue, and everlasting sape of this word of life, that maketh the righteous so, *Psal.* 92. 14. This word of a Redeemer at the first publishing, and for a long time, was but like waters issuing out from under the threshold, and then they came to the Ankles when it was published to a whole Nation, but still the longer it swells the higher above Knees and Loyns, till it be a great inexhausted River, and thus it runs at this day through the world, and hath a Healing Vertue and a Quickning Vertue, *Ezek.* 47. And a Sanctifying Vertue, *vers.* 9. 12. Now this is our errand to you, to invite you to come to these Waters; If ye thirst, come to be quenched, if ye thirst not, ye have so much the more need to come, because your thirst after things that will not profit you, will destroy you; and your unsensibleness of your need of this is your greatest misery.

That the words may be more lively unto us, we may call to mind the greatest and deepest designe that hath been carried on in the world, by the Maker and Ruler of the world, is the Marriage of Christ his Son with the Church: This was primely intended when he made the world, as a Palace to Celebrat it into; This was especially aimed at, when he joyned *Adam* and *Eva*,

Eva, in the beginning of time together in Paradise, that the second *Adam* should be more solemnly joyned to the Church at the end of time in the Paradise of Heaven. And this the Apostle draws out as the Samplar and Arch-copy of all Mariages and Conjunctions in the Creatures, *Eph.* 5. Now this being the great designe of God, of which, all other things done in time, are but the footsteps and low representations. But the great Question is, how this shall be brought about, because of the great distance and huge disproportion of the Parties. *He being the brightness of the Fathers glory*, and we being wholly ecclipsed and darkned since our fall; *He higher then the heaven of heavens*, and we fallen as low as Hell into a dungeon of darkness and misery, led away by sin and Satan, lying in that abominable posture, represented in *Ezek.* 16. Not only unsuitable to engage his Love, but fit to procure even the loathing of all that pass by.

Now it being thus, the words do furnish us with the noble resolution of the Son, about the taking away of the distance, and the royal offer of the Father, to make the Match hold the better, both flowing from infinit Love, in the most free and ablolute manner can be imagined. The Sons Resolution, which is withal the Fathers Promise, is to come into the world first, to Redeem his Spouse, and so to Marry her, *And the Redeemer shall come unto Sion*, &c. The Fathers Offer (that he might not be wanting to help it forward) is to Dispone by an irrevocable Covenant, having the force of an absolute Donation;

on ; His Word and Spirit to Christ and his Seed, to the Church even to the end of the world, *verſ.* 21. *As for me, this is my Covenant.* The Son hath done his part, and is to expreſs his infinit Love, infinit Condeſcendency, and ſtooping below his Majeſty : Now as for me, I will ſhew my goodwill to it, in my infinit Bounty and Riches of Grace to the Church, he hath given himſelf for her, I will give my Spirit, and thus it cannot but hold.

We ſhall ſpeak a word then of theſe three ; First, what Eſtate and Condition Chriſt findeth his Church into, out of which, ſhe muſt be taken to be his Spouſe ; Then what way and courſe is laid down by the Counſel of Heaven, to fill up the infinit diſtance between Chriſt and ſinners; and to cloſe all, we ſhall ſhew you the ſuitableneſs of theſe Promiſes, and the wonderful fitneſs of this Doctrine, to the Church at this time *Iſaiah* Preached it, and at all times.

The firſt is ſuppoſed in the words, Redemption ſupponeth Captivity or Slavery, Redemption of perſons importeth Captivity and Slavery of theſe perſons, and Redemption of other things that belong to perſons, importeth Sale, or Alienation of out right to them. Of both, Perſonall Redemption is the greateſt and moſt difficult ; Yet both we have need of, for our Eſtate and Fortune (ſo to ſpeak) is loſt, *For all men have ſinned and come ſhort of the glory of God,* Rom. 3. 23. That inheritance of eternal Life, we have morgaged it, and given away our

right

right to it; the favour of God and the bleſſed-
neſs of Communion with him, was *Adams* Birth-
right, and by a free Donation was made his
proper Inheritance and poſſeſſion, to be tranſ-
mitted to his Poſterity. But O how, for how
ſmall a thing did he give it away, for a little
taſt of an Aple, he ſold his Eſtate; And both
he and we may lament over it, as the King that
was conſtrained to render himſelf and all his
Army for want of Water, when he taſted it, for
how ſmall a thing (ſaith he) have I loſt my
Kingdom? Then our perſons are in a ſtate of
Bondage, in Captivity and Slavery. Captives
under the Wrath of God, and Slaves or Ser-
vants to ſin. There needed no greater diffe-
rence and diſformity between Chriſt and us
then this, our ſervitude and bondage to ſin,
which truely is the baſeſt and moſt abominable
Vaſſallage in the World. The abaſement of the
Higheſt Prince, to the vileſt ſervitude under the
baſeſt Creatures in his Dominion, is but a ſha-
dow of that loathſome and ugly poſture of our
Souls. This ſervitude doth in a manner un-
man us, and transform us into Beaſts. Cer-
tainly it is that, which in the Holy Eyes of
God, is more loathſome then any thing be-
ſide; He ſeeth not that deformity in Poverty,
Nakedneſſe, Sickneſſe, Slavery, let a man be
as miſerable as *Job* on his Dung-hill, it is not
ſo much that, as the unſeen and undiſcerned
Poſture and Habit of their Souls, that he abo-
minateth. Now what a Match is this, for the
Higheſt and Holieſt Prince, the Son of the
greateſt King and Heir of all things? But

you add to this Slavery, that Captivity under the Curſe and Wrath of God, that all men are ſhut up and incloſed in the priſon of Gods faithful and irrevocable Sentence of Condemnation, and given over by the righteous Judgement of God, to be kept by Satan in everlaſting Chains of Darkneſs: He keepeth men now, by the inviſible Cords of their own ſins, but theſe Chains of Darkneſs are reſerved for both him and men. Now indeed, this ſupperaddeth a great difficulty to the buſineſs, the other may be a difficulty to his Mind and Affection, becauſe there is nothing to procure Love, but all that may enforce Hatred and Loathing: But ſuppoſe his infinit Love could come over this ſtay, could leap over this Mountain by the freedom of it; Yet there is a greater impediment in the way, that may ſeem difficult to his Power, and it is the Juſtice and Power of God, encloſing ſinners and ſhutting them up for eternal Wrath, till a due ſatisfaction be had from, or for them. You ſee then, how infinit the diſtance is betwixt him and us, and how great the difficulty is, to bring about this intended Union. Angels were ſent with flamming Swords to encompaſs the Tree of Life, and keep it from man, but man is environed by the Curſe of the Almighty God, the Juſtice, the Faithfulneſs, and the Power of God do Guard or ſet a watch about him, that there is no acceſs to him to ſave him, but by undergoing the greateſt danger, and undertaking the greateſt Party that ever was dealt withal, and the ſtricteſt and ſevereſt too.

This

This being the caſe then, the diſtance being ſo vaſt, and the difficulty ſo great, the diſtance being twofold, between his Nature and ours, and between our quality and his: an infinit diſtance between his Divine Nature and our fleſh, and beſides an extream contrariety between the Holineſs of his Nature, and the ſinfulneſs of ours; Such a repugnancy, as there is no reconciliation of them. You know what *Paul* ſpeaketh of the Marriage of Chriſtians with Idolaters: How much more will it hold here? *What communion can be between light and darkneſs, between God and Belial?* Is it poſſible theſe can be Reduced to Amity, and brought to ſo near an Union? Yet for all this it is poſſible; But Love and Wiſdom muſt find out the way. Infinit Love, and infinit Wiſdom conſulting together, What diſtance can they not ſwallow up? What difficulty can they not overcome?

And here you have it, the diſtance undertaken to be removed, both by the Father and the Son, (for all this while we can do nothing to help it forward; Whill the bleſſed Plot is going on, we are poſting the faſter to our own deſtruction) and this is the way condeſcended upon. Firſt, to fill up that wide gap between his Divine Spiritual Nature and our Mortall fleſhly Nature, it is agreed upon, that the Son ſhall come in our Fleſh and be made partaker of Fleſh and Blood with the Children. And this is meaned by this Promiſe; *The Redeemer ſhall come to Sion.* Which

is plainly expreſſed by his own Mouth; *Joh.* 16. 28. *I come forth from the father, and come into the world.* There being ſuch a diſtance between his Majeſty and our baſeneſs, Love maketh him ſtoop down and humble himſelf to the very ſtate of a ſervant, *Phil.* 2. 7. 8. And thus the Humiliation of Chriſt filleth up the firſt diſtance, for Love and Majeſty cannot long dwell together, *Nec in una ſede morantur, Majeſtas & amor*: But Love will draw Majeſty down below it ſelf, to meet with the Object of it. This was the great Journey Chriſt took to meet with us, and it is downward below himſelf, but his Love hath choſen it, to be like us, though he ſhould be unlike himſelf. How Divinely doth the Divine Apoſtle ſpeak of it, *and the word was made fleſh, and he dwelt among us.* Jo. 1. 14. And therefore the Children of *Adam*, may in verity ſay of him what the Holy Trinity, in a Holy Irony ſpake of man, Lo he is become as one of us. It was a ſingular and eminent Priviledge conferred upon man in his firſt Creation, that the Trinity in a manner conſulted about him, *let us make man after our image*; But now when man hath loſt that Image, to have ſuch a reſult of the Counſel of the Trinity about it, let one of us be made Man, to make up the diſtance between man and us; O what Soul can rightly conceive it without Raviſhment and Wonder; without an Extaſy of Admiration and Affection, that the Lord ſhould become a Servant: The Heir of all Things, be ſtript naked of all; The Brightneſſe of the Fathers Glory, be thus Eclipſed

and

and Darkened: And in a word, that which comprehendeth all Wonders in the Creation, who made all things, he himself made of a Woman. And God became a man, and all this out of his Infinite Love, to give a Demonstration of Love to the world; So high a Person abased, to exalt so base and low as we are; There is a Mystery in this, a great Mystery, a Mystery of Wisdom, to swallow up the Understanding with Wonder; And a Mystery of Love, to ravish the hearts of men with Affection. Depths of both, in the Emptiness of the Son of God. The Prophet doubting what was commanded, to seek a Sign, whither in Heaven above, or in the Depth beneath, but what he would not ask, God gave in his great Mercy; *Behold a Virgin shall conceive a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel*: A sign indeed from Heaven, and the height of Heaven, because he is God, and a sign from the Depth beneath too, because he is man, *God with us*, and so composed to unite Heaven and Earth together: *God with us*, that he might at length bring us to be with God. He became *Immanuel*, that he might mak us *Immelanu*. If that was given as Tidings of great Joy, and as the highest and deepest sign of Love and Favour, at that time to uphold the fainting Church, O how much more may it now comfort us, when it is not a Virgin shall conceive, but a Virgin hath conceived; May not the Joy be increased, that the Redeemer is not to come, but come already, and hath made up that wide separation, which was between us

s and him, by his low condeſcendency to his Union with our Nature. This is one ſtep of Advancement towards that happy Marriage, that *the whole creation ſeems to groan and travel for*, Rom. 8. 22. But yet there is a great Difficulty in the way. We are in a ſtate of Captivity, we are priſoners of Juſtice, have ſold our ſelves and our happineſs; And now our Natural Inheritance lies in the Lake of Fire and Brimſtone, heirs of Wrath, concluded under the Curſe of God. And indeed this was inſuperable to all fleſh; Neither Men nor Angels could ranſom us from this: The Redemption of the Soul of man is ſo precious, and the Redemption of the Inheritance of man, (that is Heaven;) is ſo precious too, that none in Heaven or Earth can be found, that can pay the price of them, ſo that it would have ceaſed for ever; And here the great Deſign of Chriſts Union with ſinners, would have marred and miſcaried, if himſelf had not undertaken to overcome this too: And indeed, as there could none be found to open the Seals of the Book of Gods Decrees concerning his Church, none worthy in Heaven or Earth, but the Lamb, the Lyon of the Tribe of *Judah*: He prevailed to open it, and looſe the Seals thereof, Rev. 5. 3, 4, 5. So there could none be found in Heaven or Earth, neither under the Earth, worthy to undertake or accompliſh this work, or able to open the Seals of the Book of Gods Curſes, or to blot out the hand-writting of Ordinances that was againſt us, or to open the priſon of Death, into which man was ſhut up.

up. None I say, hath been found worthy, prevailed, but the Lamb of God and Lyon the Tribe of *Judah*: And therefore, the fo and twenty Elders that sit round about t Throne, and the four Beasts, or innumeral company of Angels, and Spirits of just m made perfect, fell down before the Lamb, ev ry one of them with Harps, and they sung new Song, *worthy is the Lamb that was slain receive power and riches and wisdom and streng and honour and glory and blessing*; For thou h *redeemed us to God by thy blood.* And every Cr ture says Amen to this, and consents to this, do him homage: To him who alone w worthy, and als willing to it, as worthy it. I think the 16. *Vers.* of this *Chapter* gi us a sensible representation of this. The p ceeding Discourse from the beginning, holdi out the sinful and deplorable condition of t people, and in them as a Type of the despe wickedness of all mankind, and withal their d sperat misery, for *Paul* Rom. 3. maketh the A plication for us; and from this, concludeth under sin, and so all under wrath, all guil that every mouth may be stopt: Men wa ing for Light, and behold Obscurity, for Brig ness, but walking in Darkness, groping the Wall, like the blind stumbling at noon da as in the night, and in desolate places as de men, all roaring like Beasts, and mourni like Doves, when ever the apprehension of t Terror of God entereth. Now it is subjoyn *Vers.* 16 *And he saw that there was no man*, & as if he had waited and looked through all

wor

orld, if any would appear, either to ſpeak or
o for man, if any would offer themſelves, and
terpoſe themſelves for his Salvation. *There-*
re his own arm brought Salvation, and his righte-
ſneſs it ſuſtained him. Therefore, the Son of
od ſteps in and offers himſelf, as if God had
ſt aſſayed all others, and when Heaven is full
wonder and ſilence, he breaks out in this,
, *I come to do thy will*, Pſa. 40. Since I have
otten a Body to be like ſinners, I will alſo
ome in their place, and I will give my Life a
anſome for them. And therefore it is ſub-
oyned, *The Redeemer ſhall come to Sion.* He
hall come Cloathed with Vengeance and In-
ignation as a Garment, againſt the enemies of
is Church, Sin and Satan, in Zeall and burn-
ng Love to his deſigned Spouſe; He ſhall
rengthen himſelf, and ſtirr up his Might
nd Fury, againſt all that detain her Cap-
ive.

Now indeed, he is the only fitteſt Perſon for
his Buſineſſe in Heaven or Earth, for he hath
oth right to do it, and he hath only Might and
ower to accompliſh it. He hath right to the
edemption of ſinners, becauſe he is our kinſ-
man, neareſt of blood to us. Now you know
he right of Redemption belonged to the kinſ-
man, *Lev.* 25. 25.

And therefore, when the neareſt kinſman
ould not redeem *Naomi* and *Ruths* parcel of
Land, *Booz* he did it as being next: And
uitable to this, our Lord Jeſus when others as
ear could not, and were not able: He hath
one it and taken Men and Angels to witneſſe.

that he hath first Redeemed us, that he mig
Marry us, as *Eph.* 5. That he hath purcha
ed us to be his Wife; And indeed the ve
word imports this. *Goel* a Redeemer a
Kinsman, passing under one word: So *Jo*
I know that my redeemer, or my kinsman live
And because our Kinsman, therefore mo
interested in our Redemption; For, *for th*
end he became partaker of flesh and blood with t
children, that he might destroy our greatest enem
Satan, and redeem us, Heb. 2. 14. And beside
he hath right to Redemption, as the Church
Husband, because he must mediat between he
and all others, none can reach her, except h
please, or prosecute a plea against her, as in th
case of the Wifes making a vow, if her Hu
band consented not, it was void, *Num.* 30
But if he heard of it and held his peace, it wa
confirmed. Now the Lord Jesus hath know
this Deplorable Estate we are Captives into
And he hath testified his utter dislike, of o
binding over our selves to Death, and resign
ing our selves to Satan: And therefore, th
bondage in which we are detained, is not co
firmed and ratified, but he hath right remain
ing to Redeem us from the hand of all our En
mies. But then, he alone hath Might an
Power to do it, for God hath laid help on hi
and made him able and mighty, to save us
the uttermost. It was not Gold or Silver
Corruptible things; Suppose the whole Ear
were turned into Gold or precious Stones;
must give person for person, and one person
quivalent to all, his own Life, his own Blo

s ; And the value of this was infinitely
d by the ſtamp of his Divinity put upon
the King for the Servant, one that knew
in for ſinners, yea God for man ; This
rads infinit Worth, and makes it an over-
om, and over-purchaſe, a ranſom to buy
perſons from Hell , a purchaſe to re-
n us to our Inheritance , Heaven that we
loſt , and theſe two ſtiles it gets ; λυτρον
λυτρον.

Now you ſee the great Difficulty is overcome
taken out of the way, Chriſt being made
urſe , hath purchaſed a redemption from
Curſe of the Law, *Gal.* 4. 13. But yet, there
nother poynt of vaſt diſtance, I may ſay, con-
iety and enmity between us and him ; he is
ly and undefiled, all fair and no ſpot in him;
are wholly defiled and depraved by ſin, our
ls are become the habitation of Devils , and
age of every unclean and hateful Bird ; In a
rd, he hath not only our Enemies to over-
he, but our own hearts to conquer , and our
mity to take away. This makes the wideſt
ration from him. Now he filled up much
he Diſtance, with his taking our fleſh , and
emoved the great Difficulty, by dying in our
h, his Humiliation to be a Man brought him
er us : And his further Humiliation , to be
ying , Crucified and Buried Man, brought
yet a ſtep nearer us. But nearer he cannot
he , for lower he cannot be, except he were
nner , which would marr the whole deſign,
take away all the Comfort of his likeneſſe to
Therefore , ſince he hath come ſo low

down to us, it is suitable we be raised up on
step to meet him: And so the Exaltation o
sinners shall make up all the Distance, an
bring the two parties to that long since design
ed, and long desired meeting. Now for thi
end and purpose, the Son undertakes the Re
demption of his Church, from sin and ungodli
ness als well as wrath; And therefore you hav
that, which is expressed as the Character of th
redeemed in this *Vers.* It is exponed as the gre
point or part of the Redemption it self, by th
Apostle, *Rom.* 11. *The Redeemer shall come*
Sion, to turn all ungodliness from Jacob. And
his end was not only to be partaker of our Na
ture, but to make us partakers of the Divine Na
ture; And therefore the Father out of his Lov
to this business, he promiseth to send his Sp
rit to dwell in our hearts, to make the Wo
sound in our Mouths and Ears, and the Spir
to work in our hearts, and this Exaltation
sinners to the participation of the Holy Spir
together with Christs Humiliation, to partak
of our Flesh makes up the full Distance, a
bringeth Christ and his Church to that holy p
tient Impatience, and longing for the day wh
it shall be Solemnized in Heaven. *The Spi*
within us, says come, and the bride says come,
even so come Lord Jesus. And he waits for u
thing, but the Compleating and Adorning
all the rest, that there may be one Jubilee for
and for ever. Now I wish we could unde
stand the Absolute and free Tenor of Gods C
venant: There is much controversy specu
tive about the Condition of the Covenant, abo

the Promiſes, whither Abſolute, or Conditional; And there is too much practical Debate in perplexed Conſciences about this, how to find ſomething in themſelvs to fit and faſhion them for the Redemption. But truely if we would not diſjoyn and diſmember the Truth of God, but take it all intirely as one great deſign of Love and Mercy revealed to ſinners, and ſo conjoyn the Promiſes of the Covenant into one bundle, we would certainly find that it hath the Voice of *Jacob*, though it ſeem to have the Hand of *Esau*; we find an abſolute, moſt free and incondition-ed ſenſe, when there is a conditional ſtrain and ſhadow of words in ſome places. The truth is, the turning of ſouls from ungodlineſs, is not properly a Condition exacted from us, as a Promiſe to be performed in us, and the chiefeſt part of Chriſts Redemption. And though ſome abuſe the grace of God, and turn it into wantonneſs and liberty: Yet certainly, this Doctrine that makes the greateſt part of the glad news of the Goſpel, to be Redemption from ſin and the pouring out of the Spirit, is the greateſt perſwaſive to a godly Converſation, and the moſt deadly enemy to all ungodlineſs.

I thought to haveſpoken more of that third thing I proponed, but take it in a word. This was always proponed to the Church, as the ſtrongeſt Cordial, it was given here as the greateſt Conſolation in all their long Captivity, that this Redeemer was afterwards to come, whoſe Vertue was then living, and preſent to the quickning and comforting of ſouls. It was thought enough to uphold in a moſt deſperat ſtrait. To

as a child is born, Isai. 8. I wish we could tak
so; Certainly it was the Character of a Belie
er before Christs coming, that he was one th
was looking and waiting for the Salvation of
rael, by this Redeemer. But now we are su
rounded with Consolation before and behin
Christ already come, so that we may in joy si
lo this is our God, we have waited for him;
thers waited and longed, and we see him: a
Christ shortly to come again without sin, to
Salvation. And what could be able to take
Joy from us, if we had one Eye always back
his first coming, and another always for w
to his comeing again?

SE

SERMON XV.

Isai. 64. 6, 7. *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses as filthy raggs*, &c.

THis peoples condition aggreeth well with ours, though the Lords dealing be very different. The Confessory part of this Prayer belongeth to us now; And strange it is, that there is such odds of the Lords Dispensations, when there is no difference in our Conditions: Always, we know not how soon the complaint may be ours also. This Prayer was prayed long before the Judgment and Captivity came one, so that it had a Prophesy in the bosome of it: Nay, it was the most kindly and affectionat way of warning, the people could get, for *Isaiah* to pour forth such a prayer, as if he beheld with his Eyes the Calamity, as already come: And indeed it becometh us so to look on the Word, as if it gave a present beeing to things als certain and sensible, as if they were really. What strange stupidity must be in us, when present things, inflicted Judgments, committed sins, do not so much affect us, as the foresight of them did move *Isaiah*. Always, as this was registrat for the

peoples uſe, to cauſe them ſtill look on Judgements threatned, as performed and preſent, and anticipat the day of Affliction by repentance: and alſo to be a Patern to them, how to deal with God, and plead with him from ſuch grounds of Mercy and Covenant Intereſt; So it may be to us a warning, eſpecially when ſin is come to the Maturity, and our ſecure backſliding Condition is with Child of ſad Judgements, when the harveſt ſeemeth ripe to put the ſickle in to it.

There is in theſe two *Verſes*, a confeſſion of their own ſinfulneſs, from which grounds they juſtify Gods proceeding with them; They take the cauſe upon themſelves, and juſtify him in his Judging, whither Temporal or Spiritual Plagues were inflicted. In this *Verſe*, they take a general ſurvey of their ſinful Eſtate, concluding themſelves unclean, and all their performances and commanded Duties, which they counted once their righteouſneſs: And from this ground, they clear Gods dealing with them, and put their mouth in the Duſt, and ſo from the Lords Judgment they are forced to enter into a ſearch of the Cauſe, ſo much ſin, and from diſcovered ſin, they pronounce God righteous in his Judgment: perceiving a great difference in the Lords manner of dealing with them and their fathers, they do not refound it upon God who is righteous in all his ways, but retort it upon themſelves, and find a vaſt diſcrepance between themſelves and their fathers, *Verſe* 5. And ſo it was no wonder that Gods Diſpenſation changed upon them;

God

God was wont to meet others, to ſhew himſelf gracious even to prevent ſtroaks; But now he was wroth with them, Nay, but there is good cauſe for it, *They rejoyced and wrought righteouſneſs*, but we have ſinned. And this may be ſaid in the general, never one needeth to quarrel God for ſevere dealing. If he deal worſe with one then with another, let every man look into his own boſome, and ſee reaſon ſufficient, yea, more provocation in themſelves then others. Always in this *Verſe*, they come to a more diſtinct veiw of their loathſome condition. Any body may wrap up their repentance in a general notion of ſin, but they declare themſelves to be more touched with it, and condeſcend on particulars, yet ſuch particulars as comprehend many others. And in this Confeſſion, you may look on the Spirits work, having ſome Characters of the ſpirit in it. Firſt, they take a general view of their uncleanneſſe and loathſome Eſtate by ſin: Not only do they ſee ſin, but ſin in the ſinfulneſſe of it and uncleanneſſe of it. Secondly, They not only conclude ſo of the Natural Eſtate they were born into, and the loathſomneſſe of their many foul ſcandals among them: But they go a further length, to paſſe als ſevere a ſentence on their Duties and Ordinances, as God hath done, *Iſai.* 1. and 66. The ſpirit convinceth according to Scriptures Light, and not according to the dark ſpark of Natures Light; and ſo that which Nature would have busked it ſelf with as its Ornament, that which they had covered themſelves with as their Garment,

had ſpread their Duties as robs of Righteouſneſſe over their ſins to hide them, all this now goeth under the name of filthineſſe and ſin. They ſee themſelves wrapt up in as vile raggs as they covered and hid ; Commanded Duties and manifeſt Breaches come in one Category : And not only is it ſome of them which their own Conſcience could challenge in the time, but all of them and all kinds of them Moral and Ceremonial, Duties that were moſt ſincere, had moſt Affection in them, all of them are filthy raggs now, which but of late were their righteouſneſſe. Thirdly, there is an univerſality ; not only of the Actions, but of Perſons, not only all the Peoples or Multitudes performances are abomination, but all of them, *Iſaiah* and one and other, the holieſt of them come in, in this Category and Rank : *We are all unclean*, &c. Though the people, it may be, could not joyn Holy *Iſaiah* with themſelves, yet humble *Iſaiah* will joyn himſelf with the people, and come in in one prayer : And no doubt, he was als ſenſible of ſin now, as when he began to prophecy ; and growing in holineſſe, he muſt grow alſo in ſenſe of ſinfulneſſe : Seing at the firſt ſight of Gods Holineſſe and Glory, he cryed *unclean*, &c. *Iſai.* 6. 5. Certainly he doth ſo now, from ſuch a principle of acceſſe to Gods Holineſſe, which maketh him abhore himſelf in Duſt and Aſhes. Fourthly, They are not content with ſuch a general ; but condeſcend to two ſpecial things, two ſpiritual ſins, to wit, Omiſſion, or ſhifting of ſpiritual Duties, which contained

the ſubſtance of Worſhip : *None calleth one thee*, few or none, none to count upon, calleth on thee, that is, careth for immediat acceſſe and approaching unto God in prayer, and meditation, *&c.* Albeit External and Temple Duties be frequent, yet who prayeth in ſecret, or if any pray, that cannot come in compt, the Lord knoweth them not, becauſe they want the Spirits ſtamp on them. This muſt be ſome other thing, nor the general conviction of ſin which the world hath, who think they pray all their days ; Here people who though they make many prayers, *Iſai.* 1. Yet they ſee them no prayers ; and no calling on Gods Name now. But Fifthly, to make the challenge the more, and the confeſſion more ſpiritual and compleat, there is diſcovered unto them this ground of their ſlackneſſe and negligence in all ſpiritual Duties, *None ſtirreth up himſelf to take hold one thee.* Here is the want of the exerciſe of Faith : Faith is the Souls hand and grip, *Jo.* 1. 12. *Heb.* 6. 18. 1 *Tim.* 6. 12. *Iſai.* 27. 5. No body awaketh themſelves out of their deadneſſe and ſecurity, to lay hold on thee : Lord thou art going away, and taking goodnight of the Land, and no body is like to hold thee by the Garment : *No Jacobs here, who will not let thee go, till thou bleſs them* ; None to prevail with thy Majeſty, every one is like to give Chriſt a free Paſport and Teſtimonial to go abroad, and are almoſt Gadarens, to pray him to depart out of their Coaſts. There is a ſtrange louſneſſe and indifferency in mens ſpirits concerning the one thing neceſſa-

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ry: Men ly by and dream over their days and never putteth the Souls Estate out of question: None will give so much pains, as to clear their interest in thee, to lay hold on thee, so as they may make peace with thee. Now can there be a more ample and lively Description of our Estate, both of the Land and of particular persons of it. Since this must not be limited to the Nation of the Jews, though the Prophet spake of the generality of them: Yet no doubt, all mankind is included in the first six *Verses*; And any secure people may be included in the seventh *Verse*, for *Paul* applyeth even such like speeches, (*Rom.* 13.) that were spoken, as you would think, of *Davids* enemies only; Yet the Spirit of God knowing the mind of the Spirit, maketh a more general use of their condition, to hold out the Natural Estate of all men out of Christ Jesus.

But there are in these two *Verses*, other two things, beside the acknowledgment of sin; First, the acknowledgment of Gods Righteousness in punishing them, for now they need not quarrel God, they find the cause of their fading in their own bosome, they now joyn sin and punishment together, wheras in the time of their prosperity, they separated punishment from sin, and in the time of their security in adversity, they separated sin from punishment, at one time making bare confession of sin, without fear of Gods Justice, at another time, fretting and murmuring at his Judgments, without the sense of their sin; But now they joyn both

these,

these, and the sight and sense of Gods displeasure maketh sin more bitter, and to abound more, and to appear in the loathsome and provoking nature of it, so that their acknowledgement hath an edge upon it. And again, the sight and sense of sin maketh the Judgment appear most righteous, and stoppeth their mouth from murmuring. In the time of their impenitency under the Rod, their language was very indifferent, *Ezek.* 18. 2. *The fathers have eaten sour graps, and the childrens teeth are set on edge.* They have sinned and we suffer, they have done the wrong and we pay for it: But it is not so now, *verse* 5. The Fathers have done righteousness in respect of us, and thou was good unto them, but we are all unclean, and have sinned, and so we are punished. Secondly, they find some cause and ground in God of their general defection, not that he is the cause of their sin, but in a righteous way he punished sin with sin. God hid his Face, denyed special Grace and Influence; and so they ly still in their security, and their sin became a spiritual plague. Or this may be so read, none calleth on thy Name, when thou hid thy Face from us, and when thou consumed us because of our iniquities; And so it serveth to aggravat their deep security, that though the Lord was departing from them, yet none would keep him and hold him; Though he did strike, yet they prayed not, Affliction did not awake them out of security, and so the last words, *Thou hast consumed us*, &c. Are differently exponed and read; Some make it thus,

thus, as it is in the Translation, *Thou hast hid thy face, and left us in a spiritual deadness*, that so there might be no impediment to bring on deserved Judgment; If we had called on thee, and laid hold on thee, it might have been prevented, we might have prevailed with God, but now our defence is removed, thou hast given us up to a spirit of slumber, and so we have no shield to hold of the stroak, thou hast now good leave to consume us for our sins: Another sense may be (Thou hast suffered us to consume in our iniquity, thou hast given us up to the hand of our sins:) And this is also a consequent of his hiding his Face, because thou hid thy Face, thou letteth us perish in our sins; There needeth no more for our Consumption, but only help us not out of them, for we can soon destroy our selves.

First, sin is in its own nature loathsome and maketh one unclean before God: Sins nature is filthiness, vileness, so doth *Isaiah* speak of himself, *Chap.* 6. 5. when he saw Gods Holiness; So doth *Job* abhore himself, which is the Affection which turneth a mans face off a loathsome object, when he saw God, *Job* 40. 4. and 42, 6. Look how loathsome our natural condition is holden out by God himself, *Ezek.* 16. You cannot imagine any deformity in the Creature, any filthiness, but it is there. The filthiness and vileness of sin shall appear, if we consider first: Sin is a transgression of the holy and spiritual Command, and so a vile thing; *The Command is holy and good*, Rom. 7. And sin violateth and goeth flat contrary

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to the Command, 1 *Joh.* 3: When ſo juſt and ſo equitable a Law is given, God might have exacted other rigorous duties from us, but when it is ſo framed, that the Conſcience muſt cry out, all is equity, all is righteous and more then righteous, thou might command more and reward none: It is Juſtice to Command, but it is Mercy to Promiſe Life to obedience, which I owe: What then muſt the offence be, againſt ſuch a Juſt Command and ſo Holy. If Holineſs be the Beauty of the Creation, ſin muſt be the Deformity of it, the only ſpot in its Face.

Secondly, look upon ſin in the ſight of Gods Holineſs and Infinit Majeſty, and O how hainous will it appear; And therefore no man hath ſeen ſin in the vileneſs of it, but in the Light of Gods Countenance. As *Iſai.* 6. 5. *Job* 40. and 42. *God is of purer eyes then to behold iniquity*, he cannot look on it, *Hab.* 1. 13. All other things beſide ſin, God looketh on them as bearing ſome mark of his own Image, *all was very good, and God ſaw it*, Gen. 1. and 2. Even the baſeſt Creatures God looketh on them, and ſeeth himſelf in them: But ſin is only Gods Eye-ſore, that his Holineſs cannot away with, it is moſt contrary unto him. And as to his Soveraignty, it is an high contempt and rebellion done to Gods Majeſty, it putteth God off the Throne, will take no Law from him, will not acknowledge his Law, but (as it were) ſpitteth in his Face, and eſtabliſheth another God. There is no puniſhment ſo evil, that God will not own as his work,

work, and declare himself to be the Author of it, but only sin; his Soul abhorreth it, his Holy Will is against it, he will have no fellowship with it: It is so contrary to him, contradicteth his Will, debaseth his Authority, despiseth his Soveraignty, vilipendeth his Truth. There is a kind of infinitness in it: Nothing can express it, but it self, no name worse then it self to set it out; The Apostle can get no other Epithet to it, *Rom.* 17. 13. *Sinful sin*, so that it cometh in most direct opposition unto God. All that is in God, is God himself, and there is no Name can express him sufficiently; If you say *God*, you say more then can be expresst by many thousand other words; So is it here, sin is purely sin. God is purely Good and Holy, without mixture, Holiness it self: Sin is simply evil, without mixture, unholiness it self; Whatever is in it, is sin, is uncleanness: Sin is an infinit wrong, and an infinit and boundless filthiness, because of the infinit Person wronged, it is an Offence of infinit Majesty: and the Person wronged aggravateth the Offence; If it be simply contrary to infinit Holiness, it must be in that respect, infinit unholinesse and uncleannesse.

Thirdly, look upon the sad Effects and Consequences of sin, how Miserable, how Ruinous it hath made man, and all the Creation, and how vile must it be? First, Look on mans Native Beauty and Excellency, how Beautiful a Creature? But sin hath cast him down from the top of his Excellency: Sin made

made *Adam* of a Friend an Enemy, of a Courtier with God, an open Rebel: was not mans Soul of more price, nor all the world, so that nothing can exchange it? Yet hath sin debased it, and prostitute it, to all vile filthy pleasures, hath made the Immortal Spirit dwell on the Dunghil, feed on Ashes, catch vanities, lying vanities, pour out it self to them, serve all the Creatures, where as it should have made them servants, yea a slave to his own greatest enemy, to the ground he treadeth upon: O what a degenerat Plant! It was a noble Vine once in Paradise, but sin hath made it a wild one, to bring forth sour Graps. What is there in all the world could defile a man? *Mat.* 15. 20. *Nothing that goeth out or cometh in, but sin that proceedeth out of the heart.* Man was all Light, his Judgment shined in to his Affections, and thorow all the Man: But sin hath made all Darkness, closed up the poor captive Understanding, hath built up a thick Wall of grosse corrupted Affections about it, so that Light can neither get in nor out. The Soul was like a clear running Fountain, which yielded fresh clear streams of holy Inclinations, Desires, Affections, Actions, and emptied it self in the Sea of Immense Majesty, from which, these Streams first flowed. But now it is a standing putrified Puddle, that casteth a vile stinck round about, and hath no issue towards God. Man was a Glorious Creature, fit to be Lord over the work of Gods own Hands, and therefore had Gods Image in a special manner, Holiness and Righteousness;

neſſe ; Gods Nature , a peece of Divinity was ſtamped on man , which outſhined all Created Perfections ; The Sun might bluſh when it looked on him ; For what was material Glory, to the Glory of Holineſſe and Beauty of Gods Image ? But ſin hath robbed poor man of this Glorious Image , hath defaced man, marred all his Glory , put on a helliſh likeneſſe on him : Holineſſe only putteth the differenc between Angels in Heaven and Devils in Hell : And ſin only hath made the difference , between *Adam* in Paradiſe , and ſinners on the curſed ground, Rom. 3. 23.

Secondly , ſin hath ſo redounded through man unto all the Creation , that it hath defiled it, and made it corruptible and ſubject to vanity, Rom. 8. 20. &c. So that this is a ſpot in all the Creatures Face , that man hath ſinned , and uſed all as weapons of unrighteouſneſſe , ſo that now the Creature groaneth to be delivered.

Thirdly , It hath brought on all the Miſery that is come on man ; or that is to come ; It hath brought on Death and Damnation as its wages , and the Curſe of the Eternal God, Gal. 3. 13. Rom. 6. 23. How odious then an evil muſt it be , that hath ſo much evil in it , yea all evil in the boſome of it : Hell is not evil in reſpect of ſin, for ſin deſerveth Hell : it hath ruined man, and made all the beautiful order of the Creation to change.

Fourthly , It ſeparateth man from God, which is worſt of all ; And this is included in the

the Text, *We are all as an unclean thing, or man,* as a leprous man ſet apart, becauſe of pollution, that may not come to the Temple, or worſhip God, ſo hath iniquity ſeparated between God and us, *Iſai.* 59. 2. And O how ſad a Divorcement is this, it maketh men *without God in the world, in whom we live and move and have our beeing, in whoſe favour is life, and at whoſe right hand are pleaſures for evermore.* Now poor man is made Miſerable, deprived of his Felicity, which only conſiſted in enjoyment of God: Sin as a thick partition Wall is come in between, Enimity alſo is come in, and divideth old friends, *Eph.* 2. 14, 15, 16, 17. And now no heavenly, or comfortable Influence can break thorow: The Night of Darkneſſe is begun, which muſt prove everlaſting, except the partition Wall be removed, all muſt wither and decay as without the Sun.

Fifthly, Look on the Price paid for ſin, on the cleanſing that waſheth it away, and you may ſee unſpeakeable deformity and vileneſſe in it: The Redemption of the Soul is precious, Silver and Gold and precious Stones will not do it, that would be utterly contemned: What (ſaith God) preſumptuous ſinner, will thou give me a farthing in payment of a ſumm, which all the world ſold at the deareſt, would not diſcharge. *Pſal.* 49. 7, 8. 1 *Pet.* 1. 18. *It is no corruptible thing, but the blood of the ſon of God.* O what muſt the Debt be, when the price is ſo infinit? The Son of God muſt dy; Nay, *It is not ſacrifice or offe-*

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ring, lo, I come to do thy will, it is Christ himself that is the Ransom, *Psal.* 40. 6, 7. And it is not much Sope or Nitre, it is not much repentance and tears that will wash away this filthinesse, No; it is of a deeper dy, *it is crimson ingrained filthiness*, Jer. 2. 22. And *Isai.* 1. 6. *Blood of bulls and goats cannot do it, but only the blood of the immaculat Lamb, offered up by himself*, Heb. 10. 4, 5. *the blood of him who, by the eternal Spirit offered up himself without spot unto God*, Heb. 9. 14. What must sin be that must have such a Fountain opened for it? It must be strange uncleanneſſe, when the Blood of Christ only can cleanse it, *Zech.* 13. 1.

We all, &c.] Mark, Secondly, sin hath gone over us all, and made all mankind unclean, *Rom.* 3. 22. and 10. Every one of *Adams* posterity is born unclean, *For who can bring an clean thing out of an unclean*, Job 14. 4. Consider first, how sin defaced innocent *Adam*, how one sin made him so vile, and spoyled him of the Divine Nature, and so the root was made unclean, and the branches must follow the root, and so are we all born and conceived in sin, *Psal.* 51. 5. We carry in us Original Corruption, flowing from the first actual sin of *Adam*, and this maketh poor Children before they do good or evil, to be abominably vile in Gods sight, even as the Child is set out, *Ezek.* 16. Every one cometh of evil Parents, all come of *Adam* the Rebel: What a loathsome sight would a Child be to us so described, *cast out in the open field to the loathing of*

its person in the day it is born : And what must it all be before *God*, *who is of purer eyes then to behold sin* ? Secondly, Unto all this we have added innumerable actual transgressions, as so many filthy streams flowing out at the members, from the inward puddle of Original Corruption ; And so how much more vile are we all, nor infants can be, or *Adam* was in the day he was cast out of Paradise ? And thus *Rom.* 3. from *vers.* 10. are the Branches set down, in Word, Thought and Deed, so that all the Inclinations and Motions and Actions of the man are only evil continually. Every man shall find his Compt past counting : One days faults would weary you, but what will your whole life do ? Known sins are innumerable, what must unknown be ? Every mans heart is like the troubled Sea, that casteth up mire and dirt dayly, and cannot be at rest. The heart is dayly flowing and ebbing in this Corruption, it cometh out dayly to the borders of all the Members ; And there are some high spring Tides, when sin aboundeth more. When in one Member of the Tongue a world of evil is, What can be in all the Members ? And what in the Soul, that is more capable then all the world ? Well then, every man hath sinned in *Adam*, and hath sinned also in his own person, and sealed *Adams* first rebellion, by so many thousand Actions like it : Every man hath approven the sin that first ruined man, and made himself much more loathsome nor *Adam* was ; Therefore all mankind may say, *we all are as an unclean thing*. Now from all this, we

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we would gladly discover unto you, what your condition is by sin; If the Lord would shine, how vile would you be? Always we must declare this unto you in the Lords name, you are all unclean, not only born in sin and iniquity, not only have you a body of Death within you, that hath all the Members, but all these Members have one time or other acted and brought forth fruit unto Death: How vile then must you be in Gods sight? It is a strange love that you have to your selves, that you cannot apprehend how God can hate you? But if he find sin in you, wonder rather how he can look upon you: We would then have you to know this, that there can be no fellowship between God and you in your Natural Estate: As men cannot inhabit a vile persons house, no more can God enter in your Souls. There is an absolute necessity of washing, before you can be his House and Temple. Hath that one sin of *Adam* made that Glorious Person so deformed, that he could not look on himself, but cover himself; And hath it been of so defiling a Nature, that it hath redounded in all the Posterity: And as unclean things under the Law, defiled all they touched, so hath that sin subjected all the Creatures to Corruption? O then imagine what an unspeakeable defilement must be on us all, who are not only guilty of *Adams* sin, but of many thousands beside. If one sin have so much loathsomnese in it, what must so many out of number, united in one person, even as in us all?

all? *No unclean thing can enter in Heaven above*: Know this for a truth, you cannot see Gods Face in the case you are born into. You know nothing of sin, who wonder that any should go to Hell. No, if you knew any thing of sin, you would wonder that ever God should look on such cast out in the open Field, in their blood.

Next, You must know the insufficiency of all things imaginable, to wash away sins filthinesse, except the Blood of Christ. Since you are unclean, do you not ask, how shall we be washed? Indeed many have an easy answer, and passe it lighty. The multitude know no way to cleanse in, but the Tears of Repentance and Mourning; And so, many think themselves clean, when they run and pour out a Tear as *Esaw* did for the blessing. But what saith the Lord? *Though thou wash the with Nitre, and take thee much Sope, yet thine iniquity is marked.* Can such an ingrained uncleanneſse, can such an infinite spot in the immortal Soul, be so lightly dashed out? Many think Baptism cleanseth them, but was not this people Circumcised, as ye are baptized? And *Peter* tells us, it is not the washing of Water, 1 *Pet.* 3. 21. Sacrifice and Offering will not do it: This people thought sure they had satisfied God, when they brought a Lamb, &c. but all this is abomination. Would not many of you think your selves cleansed from

from sin, if you offered all your Substance and the Fruit of your Body for the sin of your Soul? Nay, but you must see an absolute necessity of the opened Fountain, of Christs Blood, that cleanseth from all sin.

Then we would have you abhorre your selves in Dust and Ashes, see nothing in all the Creation so vile, as you; Look on sin in the sight of Gods Face, and how unholy will it appear? There are many sins little ones, that in our practice passe for venial and uncontrolled: But look on the filthy loathsome Nature of all sin, and hate the least offence, for it hath a kind of infiniteness in it, and blotteth the Soul, defileth the person. How great a necessity is there of continual application to the Fountain, of dwelling beside it, that you may wash daily. *Davids* so often repeated, and inculcated prayer, *Wash me, cleanse me*, &c. *Psal.* 51. Declareth that he hath apprehended much uncleanness in sin, that it needeth so many applications of the precious Blood. And you who have come to Jesus and are clean, O how much owe you to free Grace that past by you in your blood, and said *Live, it is a time of love.* How strange is it that Glorious Majesty cometh to own Deformity, and cometh to cloath it with his own Garments: Praise the vertue of the Blood, that is more precious nor the Blood of Bulls and Goats, that can so through-

ly purge, as you ſhall have no more Conſcience of ſin.

Unclean ſinners waſh you, make you clean, there is a Fountain opened, though ſin were as Scarlet, it can perfectly change the colour of it. If you waſh not while the Fountain is open, it will quickly be ſealed on you, and then it ſhall be ſaid, when the *Angel ſweareth by him that liveth for ever, that time ſhall be no more*, then ſhall it be ſaid, *let him that is unclean, be unclean ſtill.* Now cleanſing is offered in the Goſpel, if you will love your loathſomneſſe ſo well, as not to dip your ſelves in this Fountain, then let the unclean be ſo ſtill: Your repentance will never change your colour, though you ſhould melt in ſorrow: And therefore you who have found a way to be ſaved otherways not by Jeſus Chriſt, you ſhall be deceived; Your Tears and Mourning that you might have had, though Chriſt had never come in the world, is all you uſe to ſpeak of, and build your hope on: and if you ſpeak of Chriſt, it is in ſuch terms as to buy him by ſuch repentance, ſo that the truth is, you uſe but Chriſts Name as a ſhadow, you make no uſe of him: He needed not to have come in the world, for many of you could have done als well without him. But as many of you as cannot find cleanſing, who ſee filth increaſe by waſhing, come to Chriſt Jeſus, and ſay, *If thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean*, Math. 8. 2. Nothing beſide Jeſus can do it, believe his ſufficiency; nothing beſide him Will do, believe his willingneſſe; for, for this cauſe he is an opened Fountain that all may come and draw.

SERMON XVI.

Isai. 64. 6, 7. —— *All our righteousnesse are as filthy raggs, and we all do fade a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind have taken us away.*

NOt only are the direct breaches of the Com mand uncleanneſſe, and men original and actually unclean, but even our holy Ac ons, our commanded Duties: Take a mans vility, religion and all, his universal inhere Righteousneſſe, all are filthy raggs: And he the Church confeſſeth nothing, but what G accuſeth her of, *Isai. 66. 3.* and *Chap. 1. Ve* 11, 12, 13. *&c.* This people was much in C remonial and External Duties, and therefo they cryed, *the temple of the Lord, the temple of Lord*, as if this would have outcryed all their ther ſins: therefore were they proud, and lo in their own eſtimation and innocent, *Jer. 2.* 35. They thought the many good ſervices th did to God, might compenſe all their wron *Mic. 6. 6, 7.* They gave a price to Juſtice their ſins, even a confeſſion of it by offerin Lamb, *&c.* and a purpoſe to amend. But what ſenſe the Prophet hath of all this, *Lord our righteousneſſe is* filthy likewiſe; Albeit ha

have paid the Debt of sins with Duties; yet now we see all these are sins themselves, and must have another sacrifice, so that all matter of boasting is now removed, and we are stript naked of all righteousnesse; We covered our filthinesse before, with Duties, now both the one and the other is filthy. We would look upon two sorts of righteousnesses, the natural mans and the converted mans, upon the ones Civility and fair Profession, and upon the others real or true Grace in discharge of Duties, and we shall find good reason to conclude both the one and the other under filthinesse, so that there is no ground of boasting, no inherent righteousnesse can make us accepted before God.

First then, whatever men can do from Natural Principles, all the flower and perfection of mens Actions, both civil and religious, is but abominable before God, as long as their persons are unjustified. Every performance is defiled by the uncleanesse of the person. And therefore *God heareth not sinners, Joh.* 8. That is unjustified sinners, though they pray much, yet God heareth them not. And this is lively expressed by *Hag.* 2. 12, 13, 14. As the Priests Holy Garments and Flesh could not make Bread or Pottage holy, but the unclean body could make these unclean; So this Nations and Peoples performances and Holy Duties, could not make them Holy, and their Persons clean; But their unclean persons and actions made all their performances unclean: The solemn meeting and sacrifice, *&c.* could not make them accepted, but their unclean persons, made their

ſolemn meetings and religious Duties vile an
abominable in Gods ſight: And thus *to*
unclean all things are unclean, even their mi
and conſcience, *Tit.* 1. 15. The unbelievi
man who is born unclean, and defiled with
much original corruption, and ſo many act
tranſgreſſions, defileth all things he touche
As a dead body, or a leprous garment under
Law, made all unclean it touched, and nothi
could make it holy by touching of it. So
your Civility, all your Profeſſion will ne
contribute to the cleanſing of your Perſon; A
your perſons ſhall defile all your moſt cl
actions. God loveth not that ſtock of *Ad*
and all that groweth on it, muſt be hateful;
is only well pleaſed in Jeſus Chriſt, and w
thoſe who are tranſplanted out of rotten *Ad*
into the true Vine Jeſus, it is ſuch fruit only
can be acceptable: Therefore until you
ſprinkled with clean water, and made clean
cording to the new Covenant way, you can
pleaſe God. Believe this, your ſins and y
duties are one; your Oaths and your Pra
are in the ſame account with God. What h
you then to build upon, when all this is rem
ed? You muſt once be ſtript naked of all
verings; and will not your nakedneſs the
great: The Phariſee went away unjuſtifi
and the poor repenting ſinner juſtified. W
was the reaſon? There are not many of
have ſuch a fair venture for Heaven as he h
ſo many Prayers, Faſtings, Alms, to ground y
Hope on. Nay, but all this would never
ſtify his perſon, becauſe once he was unc

come of *Adam*, and had contracted more uncleanneſſe, and all that is like the leprous Garment defiling all that cometh near it; So that whatever hath any dependence on a ſon of *Adam*, muſt contract filthineſſe. Now I ask your Conſciences, have you ſo many ſpecious coverings to adorn your ſelf with? *Is* not your outſide ſpotted, and not ſo clean, as the young civil Man and the religious Phariſee? Certainly, no, and yet you have no other ground to plead the acceptation of your perſons upon, but only this, your Prayers and Tears, or ſome ſuch Duty performed by you. Well, all is uncleanneſſe, ſince your perſons were once unclean, no Sope nor Nitre can waſh it, no holy fleſh make it holy, no good wiſhes nor duties can make it acceptable. Did not this people think of their Duties as much as you do? And had more reaſon ſo to do; for our Congregations have not ſo much form of godlineſſe as they had, and yet God ſolemnly proteſteth to them, that all their works were defiled, even thoſe which they took to waſh themſelves with, ſo your repentance and tears muſt be als filthy, as the ſin you would waſh by it.

Secondly, the uncleanneſſe of mens practice maketh unclean performances, *unclean hands make unclean prayers*, Iſai. 1. 15. When men go on in ſin, and uſe their members as inſtruments of unrighteouſneſſe againſt God, and guiltineſſe is above their head unrepented of, and unpardoned, then whatever the members act for God in religious Duties, it muſt be alſo abominable, for will God take prayers from ſuch a mouth,

that cursing cometh out of? *Isai.* 3. 10, 11, 12. Shall sweet water come out of one Fountain with bitter? Or can a Fig Tree bear both Thistles and Graps: Certainly, profane Conversation must make unclean profession. And therefore your coming to the Church and Ordinances, your praying in your Families or such like, must of necessity be defiled, since out of the same mouth cometh cursing, railing, lying, filthy speeches: Your tongues are so often imployed in Gods dishonour, to blaspheme his Name; to slander your Neighbours, to reproach the Saints, that all your prayers must be of the same stamp, and als bitter as the other stream of your actions: When you stretch forth your hands to make many prayers, to take the Bread and Wine, shall not God hide his Face from such hands, as are unclean with many abominations, some murdering, some abusing their Neighbours, some Sabbath-breaking, some filthinesse, how oft have your hands and feet served you to evil turns; And therefore your good turns will never come in remembrance. Nay, believe it, you cannot be heard of God while you cover any offence. And this I may say in general, even to the Saints; any known sin given way to, and intertained without controlment, without wrestling against it, hindereth the acceptation of your solemn approaches. *If your heart regard iniquity, shall God hear?* Ps. 66. 18. No, believe it, the least sin that you may judge at first venial, and then give it toleration and indulgence, shall separat between Gods Face and you: Your prayers are abo-

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mination, becauſe of ſuch an idol perked up in the heart beſide God, that getteth the Honour and Worſhip due to him, and God muſt answer you according to it, *Ezek.* 19. 1, 3, 4. God will not be enquired of ſuch as give allowance to ſin, *Ezek.* 14. 2, 3, 4. And on the other hand, no ſin how great and hainous ſoever can hinder Gods gracious acceptation, when Souls fly unto Jesus and turn their back upon ſin, or giveth it no heart allowance: And to the multitude I ſay, all that you do or touch in a Duty muſt be defiled, becauſe your whole way is unclean, *Hag.* 2. 12, 13, 14. Think you to ſin all the week thorow, and worſhip God on the Sabbath, will you lie, ſwear, commit adultery, rail and curſe, and come and ſtand before me, ſaith the Lord? No certainly, you cannot be accepted; And will you hate reformation in your lives, and yet take his Covenant in your mouth, and call your ſelves by his Name, *Chriſtians*? And ſhall not God challenge you for that als much, as for your ſwearing, and curſing, and lying, *&c.* Indeed the Lord putteth all in one Roll, and you need not pleaſe your ſelves in ſuch things, *Pſal.* 50. 16. *Jer.* 7. 9, 10. For it is all one to you to go to Tavern to drink, and come to the Sermon, to blaſpheme Gods Name, and call on it, becauſe the profanity of the one defileth the other, and the holineſs of the other, cannot make you holy.

Thirdly, the natural mans performances want the uprightneſs, reality and ſincerity that is required, it is but a painted Tomb, full of rottenneſs within, it is but a ſhadow without

ſubſtance, for he wanteth the ſpiritual part of worſhip, which God careth for, *who will be worſhiped in ſpirit and truth*, Joh. 4. 23. Now what is it that the moſt part of you can ſpeak of, but an outſide of ſome few duties, ſoon numbered. You hear the preaching, and your hearts wander about your buſineſs: You hear, and are not ſo much affected, as you would be to hear ſome old ſtory, or fable told you: A ſtage play acted before this generation, would move them more then the Goſpel doth: So that Chriſt may take up this Lamentation; *We have piped to you, and you have not danced, lamented to you, and you have not mourned.* You uſe to tell over ſome words in your prayers, and are not ſo ſerious in any approach to God, as in twenty other things of the world. Whatever you plead of your hearts rightneſs, and have recourſe to it, when your converſation cannot defend you, yet your hearts are the worſt of all, and have no uprightneſs towards God, for you know that what Duties you go about, it is not from an inward principle, but from Education or Cuſtome, or conſtraint. Are you upright, when you are forced for fear of cenſure to come here, or to pray at home? Is that ſincerity and ſpiritual worſhip? And for the more poliſhed and refined profeſſors, you have this moth in your performances, and this flea to make your Oyntment to ſtink, that you do much, to be ſeen of men, therefore what little fervour of ſpirit is in ſecret Duties; There you may meaſure your altitude and your life. And O how wearieſome, how lifeleſs are ſecret approaches, you would

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not have many errands to God, if you thought no body looked upon you. And for ſpirituality, it is a Myſtery in all mens practice: Who directeth his Duty to Gods Glory? If you get ſome flaſh of liberty, you have your deſire; But who miſſeth Gods preſence in Duties, which a world will approve? Who go mourning as without the Sun, even when you have the Sunſhine of Ordinances and walketh in the light of them?

And fourthly, though your performances had uprightneſs of heart going alongs, and much affection in them, yet all are filthy, becauſe of want of Faith in Jeſus Chriſt. When you make your Duties a covering of your ſins, and think to ſatisfy Gods Juſtice for the reſt of your faults, by doing ſome point of your Duty, then it cannot chooſe but be polluted in his ſight. And this very thing was the cauſe of Gods rejecting the Jews righteouſneſs, even becauſe they did not look to the end of the Myſtery, *Chriſt Jeſus*: Did not pull by the vail of Ceremonies, to ſee the Immaculat Lamb of God ſlain for ſin. And therefore doth the Lord ſo quarrel with them, as if he had never commanded them to do ſuch things, *Iſai.* 1, 12, 13. *Who hath required theſe things at your hands? bring no more vain oblations*, all is Abomination. Even as God ſhould ſay to you, when you come to the Church; who required you to come? Who commanded you to come to hear the Preaching? What have you to do to pray? What warrand have you to communicat? All your Praying, Hearing, Communicating, is Abomination; who com-

manded you to do these things? Would you not think it a foolish Question? You would soon answer, that God himself commanded you, and will he not let us do his bidding. Indeed this people, (no doubt) have said so in their heart, and wondered what it meant. Nay, but here is the Mystery, you go about these commanded Duties not in a commanded way, and so the Obedience is but Rebellion: You bring Offerings and Incense, and think that I am pacified when you bring Alms, you judge you have given me a recompense, whereas, all that is mine, and what pleasure have I in these things? I never appointed you Sacrifices for this end, but to lead you in to the knowledge of my Son, which is to be slain in the fulness of time, *and by one offering to perfect all.* I commanded you to look on Jesus Christ slain, in the slain Lamb, and so to expect Remission and Salvation in him; But you never looked to more nor the Ceremony, and made that your Saviour and Mediator: And therefore it is all Abomination: When you slay a Lamb, and offer Incense, it is all one thing, as to cut off a Dogs neck, or kill a Man; So may the Lord say to this Generation, I command you to pray, to repent and mourn for sin; to come and hear the Word, but withal you must deny all these, and count your selves unprofitable servants, you must singly cast your Souls burthen on Christ Jesus. But now, (saith the Lord) who commanded your repentance, for when you sit down to pray, or come in publick to confesse sin before the Congregation, you think you are washen; When you have said,

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you have ſinned, and if you come to the length of Tears and Sorrow, Oh then ſure you are pardoned, though in the mean time you have no thought of Jeſus Chriſt, and knoweth no uſe of him. Therefore, ſaith the Lord, who commanded you to do theſe things? You think you have ſatisfied for your ſin, when you pay a penalty, but who requireth this? I will reckon with you for theſe, als well as the ſins you pray and mourn for, becauſe you do not ſingly look to Chriſt Jeſus, Now, if he had never come to the world, your ground of confidence would not fail you; For you might have prayed als much, mourned and confeſſed, and promiſed amendment, and ſo you paſt by *the Son of God, in whom only the Father is well pleaſed.* Think then upon this, whatever you make your righteouſneſſe, there needeth no other thing to make it filthy, but to make it your righteouſneſſe: Your confidence in your good heart to God, prayer day and night, and ſuch like, is the moſt loathſome thing in Gods Eyes: Except you come to this, to count your prayers, as God doth, among your oaths, to count your ſolemn Duties, among profane ſcandalous Actions, as the Lord doeth, *Iſai.* 1. and 66. 3. Then certainly, you do adorn your ſelves with them; and cover your nakedneſſe of other faults, with ſuch leaves as *Adam* did, but you ſhall be more diſcovered; Your Garment is als filthy, as that it hideth, even becauſe you make that uſe of it to hide your ſin, and cover it.

Next, The Lords Children have no ground of boaſting either, from their own righteouſneſſe;

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The holiest Saint on Earth must abhore himself in Dust and Ashes, and holy *Isaiah* joyneth himself in with a prophane people: When he cometh to God to be justified, he cometh among the ungodly, he bringeth no righteousnesse with him, he cometh in among them that work not. Now you shall find good ground why it must be so. First, There are ordinarly many blemishes in our holiest Actions, spots on our cleanest Garment, often formality eateth up the life of Duties, and presenteth a Body without a Soul in it: You sit down to pray out of custome, morning and evening: And if there were no more to prove it, this may suffice: When pray you but at such times? You have an ordinar, and goeth not by it, no advantage is taken of Providence, no necessity constraineth when occasion offereth; and so it is like the worlds appointed houres. How great deadnesse and indisposition creepeth in, so that it is the ordinary complaint, yea, all prayers filled with it, scarcely any room for other petitions, because of the want of frame for prayer it self: The word is heard as a discourse, and on whom hath it operation to stirr up Affections, either of joy or of trembling? Christians, you come not to hear God speak, and so you meet with empty Ordinances, God is not in them. How often do crooked and sinister ends creep in, and byas the Spirit; Men ask to spend on their lusts, and to satisfy their own ambition; Some would have more Grace to be more Eminent; or to have a more pleasant Life; And this is but the seeking to spend on your lusts. If Affection

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run in the Channel of a Duty, it is often muddy, and runneth thorow our Corruptions: Liberty in Duties is principled with carnal Affection and Self-love. Will not often the Wind of Applause in company, fill the sails, and make your course swifter and freer, nor when you are alone. And often much love to a particular, maketh more in seeking it. And that which is a Moth to eat up and consume all our Duties, is conceit and self confidence in going about them, and attributing to our self after them. It is but very rare, that any man both Acteth from Jesus Christ as the principle, and also putteth over his work on Christ singly as the end. Alas too often do men draw out of Christs Fulnesse and raise up their own glory upon it, and adorn themselves with the spoyls of his honour; For we use to pray from a habit of it, and go to as men acquainted with it, and when we get any satisfaction to our own minds, O how doth the Soul return on it self, and goeth not forward as it goeth; It is so well pleased with it self, when it getteth liberty to approach, that it doth not put all over on Jesus, and take shame to it self. As long as there is a body of Death within, holinesse cannot be pure and unmixed; Our Duties run thorow a dirty Channel, and cannot choose but contract filth; While sin lodgeth under one roof so near Grace, Grace must be in its exercise marred, and therefore the holy Apostle must cry, *Rom.* 7. 19. *The good that I would, I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do.* And Verse 24. *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*

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Secondly, Though there were not such blemiſhes, and ſpots in the face of our righteouſneſſe, yet it is here in a ſtate of imperfection, and but in its minority, and ſo muſt be filthy in the Lords ſight. It was perfect Holineſſe according to the perfect Rule of Gods Law, that *Adam* was to be juſtified by, according to the Covenant of works, exact obedience, not one wanting, or elſe all that can be done, came ſhort of righteouſneſs: One breach bringeth the curſe on. All obedience (if there be a failing in a little) will not bring the bleſſing on; He that doth all, liveth; and he that doth not all, is curſed. And therefore Chriſtians, all you do cannot commend your perſons to God, for if he examine you by the rule of the Law, O how ſhort will the holieſt come? *Paul* and *Iſaiah* dare not come in ſuch a reckoning: Neither is all obeyed, nor any in the meaſure and manner commanded. And therefore, you might cry down all your performances, when you could challenge them with no particular blot, with this, All is ſhort of the command, and infinitly ſhort. I have been aiming at holineſs ſo long, I have ſtretched out my ſtrength, and what have I attained? It may be, I have outſtriped equals, and there ſeemeth to be ſome diſtance between me and others; Nay, but the command is unſpeakably more before me, nor I am before others. I have reached but a ſpan of that boundleſs perfection of holineſs; It is but a grain weight of the eternal weight of grace, and I muſt forget it, and ſtand before God, as if I had loſt mind of duties, appear in his preſence, as if I had attained nothing;

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for the length that is before my hand, drowneth up all attainments.

Thirdly, Nay, but put the case man were perfect, *yet should he not know his soul, but despise his life; The Lord putteth no trust in his servants, and his Angels he chargeth with folly, and the Heavens are not clean in his sight, how then must man be abominable, that hath his foundation in the dust, and drinketh in iniquity like water? How should God magnifie him? or he be righteous that is born of a woman?* Job 25. 4, 6. and 15. 14, 15. and 4. 18, 19. *Job* was a great length in the sight of his own vileness, and Gods holiness, when he saw this, *Though I were perfect, yet I would not know it, but despise it, I would not answer him, though I were righteous*, Chap. 9. 14, 15, 21. So unspeakably pure and clean is his Holiness, that all created holiness hath a spot in it before his, and evanisheth, as the Stars disappear when the Sun riseth, which seem something in the darkness. The Angels holiness, the Heavens glory, is nothing to him, *before whom the Nations are as nothing*, so that it is all the wonder of the world, that ever God stooped so far below himself, even to righteous *Adam*, as to make such a Covenant with him, to account him righteous in obedience. *What is man that thou should magnifie him? When I look to the Heavens, and the Sun, the work of thine hands, Lord, what is man?* What is innocent man in his integrity, that thou should magnifie him, to give him a place to stand before thee, magnifie him to be a party-contracter with thy glorious Majesty? *Psal.* 8. 4, 5, 6. But now when this Covenant is broken, it is become impossible

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to a ſon of *Adam*, ever to ſtand before God in his perfection, for *how ſhould man be righteous that is born of a woman? Job* 14. 15. Since we once ſinned, how ſhould our righteouſneſs ever come in remembrance? Therefore hath God choſen another way to cover mans wickedneſs and righteouſneſs both, with his own righteouſneſs, his Sons Divine-humane righteouſneſs, which is ſo ſuited in his infinit wiſdom for us: It is a mans righteouſneſſe, that it may agree with men, and be a fit garment to cover them; It is Gods righteouſneſſe, that it may be beautiful in Gods eyes, for he ſeeth his own image in it. And it is not the created inherent righteouſneſſe of Saints glorified, that ſhall be their upper garment that ſhall be their Heaven and glory-ſuit, (ſo to ſpeak,) they will not glory in this, but only in the Lambs righteouſneſſe for evermore. Saint-holineſſe muſt have a covering above, for it cannot cover our nakedneſſe: And all the ſongs of them that follow the Lamb, make mention of his righteouſneſſe, even of his only. The Lamb is the light and Sun of the City, the Lamb is the Temple of it, in a word, he is all that is beautiful and glorious: Every Saint hath put on the Lord Jeſus, and is perfect thorow his comelineſſe: At leaſt, if the holineſſe of ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, be the glorious habit above; yet all the beauty and glory of it is from Chriſt Jeſus whoſe image it is, and the Spirit whoſe work it is. It ſhall be ſtill true, All our righteouſneſſe, as ours, is filthy, and all holineſſe, as it hath a relation to us, cannot pleaſe God, it muſt be ſpotted before his pure eyes, but only it

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is accepted and clean., as it is Christs and the Spirits, as it is his own garment put upon us, and his own comlineſſe making us perfect. It is not ſo much the inherent cleanneſs of the Saints robs that maketh them beautiful in his eyes, as this, *That they are waſhed in the blood of the Lamb*, Rev. 7. 14.

Now from all this we would ſpeak a word to two ſorts of you: There is one great point of Religion that is the principal and foundation of all other, even free Juſtification by Faith in Jeſus, without our own righteouſneſs. And the moſt part ſtumble here in the entry: It is the greateſt obſtruction of ſouls coming to Chriſt Jeſus, even the ignorant and blind conceit and fancy that almoſt every man hath of himſelf, and his own performances: The world will not make many believe the half of the evil of themſelves, that is ſpoken in the Word. If you have a general conviction of ſinfulneſſe and miſery, yet you think to help it. If you ſin, you uſe to make an amends, run to your prayers, and repentance, to give God a recompence, and ſatisfie your own Conſciences: Speak now, is not this the way you think to be ſaved? I ſhall do what I can, pray and mourn for ſin, and what I am not able to do, God muſt forgive, you will do all you are able, or can, and Gods mercy muſt come in to ſupply the want of your righteouſneſs; But this is to put a new piece of cloath in an old garment, to make the rent worſe: Many of you have no other ground of confidence in the world, nothing to anſwer the challenge of Conſcience, or ſatisfie Juſtice but this, *I repent*,

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I am ſorry, I mourn, I ſhall amend, I reſolve never to do the like again. Now then from this ground we would declare unto you in the Lords Name, you are yet unclean, both in perſons and actions unjuſtified, becauſe you have no other covering but your own duties and performances: And let theſe be examined, and weighed in the ballance of the Sanctuary, and they will be found light. *All your righteouſneſſe* (ſaith the Lord) *is filthineſſe*: You are unclean, you cannot deny, both by birth and education, you have often defiled your ſelves with ſins, you muſt confeſſe: Now I ask you, How will you cover that uncleanneſſe and nakedneſſe? How will you hide it from Gods eyes and your own Conſcience? You know no way but this, I will pray, I will repent, and amend. So then you cover your ſelf with prayer, with ſorrow and tears, and a reſolution of amending, this then is all your covering and ornament, ſomething done by you; as many will make the wings of two good works ſtretch themſelves out ſo far, as to cover and hide a multitude of offences between them. Therefore I declare in the Lord Jeſus his Name unto you, whoſe Conſcience muſt go alongs in the acknowledgment and owning of your caſe, that you have covered your ſelves with your own righteouſneſſe, that you have taken as filthy rags to cover your nakedneſſe and ſin with, as your ſins are, and ſo you have made an addition to your uncleanneſs, you are more unclean by your prayers and repentance then before: And ſo God is of more pure eyes, then to look graciouſly on ſuch as you

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are. You have gone about to eſtabliſh your own righteouſneſſe, and hath not known the righteouſneſſe of God, and ſo you have come ſhort of it; you are yet perſons in a ſtate of enmity, God is your Judge, you are rebels: It concerns you much to heed this well, to judge of your own actions and perſons as God judgeth of them, for if God ſhall judge one way, and you judge another way, you may be far miſtaken in the end. If you have ſo good an opinion of your ſelves and your duties, that you can plead intereſt in God for them, and abſolve your ſelves from ſuch grounds: And if God have not the ſame judgement, but rather think as evil of your prayers, as of your curſing, and abhor the thing that ſatisfieth you, will it not be dreadful in the end? For his judgement ſhall ſtand, and you will ſuccumb in judgement, ſince you croſſed Gods mind. Therefore we would have you ſolidly drink in this principle of Religion, That man is ſo unclean, and God ſo abhorreth him, that whatever he doth, or can do, it cannot make him righteous, that no good action can make him acceptable, and take away the uncleanneſs of the evil actions; and that any ſinful action taketh away all the cleanneſs of the good actions. Once believe this, If I ſhould ſweat out my life in ſerving God, and never riſe off my knees, If I ſhould give my body to the fire for the truth, If I ſhould melt away in tears for ſin, all this is but filthy raggs, and I can never be accepted of God for all that, but the matter of my condemnation groweth: If I juſtifie my ſelf, my own mouth proves me perverſe: God needeth

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no more but my good deeds to condemn me for, in all justice: And therefore it is a thing impossible, I will never put forth a hand, or open a mouth upon that account any more. I will serve God, because it is my duty, but life I will not expect by my service, when I have done all, it is wholly mercy that I am accepted; my good works shall never come in remembrance, I resolve to be found, not having my own righteousnesse, I will appear among the ungodly sinners, as one that hath no righteousnesse, that I may be justified only by faith in Jesus Christ, I say, drink in this truth, and let it settle in your hearts, and then we would hear numbers cry, *O what shall I do to be saved?*

Now as for you who have fled unto Christs righteousnesse only & have cast away your own as dung and dross, as filthy raggs, as you have done right in the point of Justification, judge so likewise after it. We would exhort you to judge so of your best actions that are the fruits of the Spirit, judge so of them as you have found in them: *All our righteousnesses*: Mark, *Isaiah* a holy Prophet joyneth himself in with the multitude. And the truth is, the more holiness the more humility and self-abasing; for what is holiness, I pray you, but self-denial, the abasing of the creature, and exalting of Christ Jesus. This is the Cross that the Saints must all bear, *Deny your self, and follow me*. Grace doth not swell men above others, it is gifts, such as Knowledge that puffeth up; Charity or Love puffeth not up. Men are naturally high-minded, for pride was the first sin of *Adam*, and grace

cometh to level men, to make the high mountains valleys for Christs Chariot; It maketh men stoop low to enter the door of the Kingdome. Therefore if you have attained any measure beyond others, if you would prove it real grace and holinesse, do not exalt your selves above others, be not high minded, come down and sit among the ungodly, among the unclean, and let not grace given diminish the low estimation of your self in your self: There is a growing that is but a fancy, and mens conceit, when men grow above Ordinances, above other Christians, and can see none or few Christians but themselves, such a growth is not real, its but fancy, its but swelling and wind, and must be pricked to let it out. A holy Prophet came in among an unclean people, he did not say, *Stand by, I am holier then thou.* Such a man as can find no Christian about him, even though to the judgement of all others, they seek God more then he, such a man hath not real solid grace, his holiness is profane holiness, and proud holiness; for true holiness is humble holiness, and in honour preferreth others.

There is a great fault among those who have fled to Christs righteousness in Justification, that they use to come full from duties, as a stomach from a honey comb. Oft times we make our liberty and access to God, the ground of our acceptation, and according to the ebbings and flowings of our inherent righteousness, so doth the faith and confidence of Justification ebb and flow. Christians, this ought not to be. In so doing, you make your own righteousness your righteousness before God: for when the unsatis-

ſatisfaction in the point of duty, maketh you queſtion your intereſt ſo often, is not the ſatisfaction of your minds in duties, made the ground of your pleading intereſt. Give you liberty and acceſs, you can believe any thing, remove it, and you can believe nothing. Certainly this is a ſandy foundation, you ought to build nothing on performances, you ſhould be as vile in your own eyes, and think your nakedneſs as open when you come neareſt God, when you have moſt livelineſs, as when he hideth his face & duty withereth; will filthy raggs be your ornament? No Chriſtians, be more acquaint with the unſpotted righteouſneſs of the Immaculat Lamb of God, and find as great neceſſity of covering your cleaneſt duties with it, as your fouleſt faults, and thus ſhall you be kept ſtill humble and vile in your own eyes, and have continual imployment for Chriſt Jeſus: your beſt eſtate ſhould not puff you up, and your worſt eſtate ſhould not caſt you down. Therefore be much in the ſearch of the filthineſs of your holy actions; This were a ſpiritual ſtudy, a noble diſcovery to unbowel your duties, to divide them, and give unto God what is Gods, and take unto your ſelves what is your own: The diſcovery of filthineſs in them, needeth not hinder his praiſe; And the diſcovery of grace in them, needeth not marr your ſhame. God hath moſt glory when we have moſt ſhame, theſe two grow in juſt proportion, ſo much is taken from God, as is given to the creature.

Thirdly we would alſo preſs you from this ground to long much to be clothed upon with immortality,

immortality, to put off the filthy raggs of time, and earth-righteousnes, and to be clothed upon with the white robs of the righteousnes of the Saints. As you would dwell near the fountain here, and be still washing your garments, and offering all your sacrifices in him who sanctifieth all, so would you pant and thirst for this spotles garment of glory: Glory is nothing but perfect holines, holines washen and made clean in the Lambs blood: your rags are for the prison and for sojourning: when you come to your fathers house, your raiment shall be changed. Therefore Christians, every one of you aspire higher, sit not down in attainments, forget what is behind, and presse forward: let perfect holinesse be in your eye and purpose, sit not behind it: All our time-duties have much filthinesse; long for the pure stream that waters the City above: Grace is not in its native place, it is corrupted and mixed here: Heaven is the own Element of it, and there is grace without mixture. Undervalue all your performances, till you be above, where that which is in part, shall be done away, where no unclean thing entereth.

Fourthly, This likewise holdeth out to you a continual necessity of washing. You must take up house beside the fountain opened in the house of *David*; and never look on any piece of inherent righteousnesse, but see a necessity of dipping it in the Lambs blood. And therefore should you pray alwayes in Christs Name, that the prayer which of it self, would be cast as dung on

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our face, may have a sweet savour from him. Cover your holinesse with Christs righteousnes and make mention of it only.

SERMON XVII.

Isaiah 64 6. —— *And we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

HEre they joyn the punishment with the deserving cause, their uncleanness and their iniquities, and so take it upon them, and subscribeth to the righteousnesse of Gods dealing.

We would say this much in general, First, No body needeth to quarrel God for his dealing, *he will alwayes be justified when he is judged.* If the Lord deal more sharply with you then with others, you may judge, there is a difference between your condition and theirs, as well as in the Lords dispensation, even as this people do, *vers.* 5 6. It is a strange saying, *Lam.* 3. 33. *The Lord doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.* That is, (as we conceive) the Lord hath not such pleasure in trampling on men, as he might do on the dust of his feet. Though he be absolute soveraign Lord of the Creature, and men be but as the dust of his feet, and he may do with his own what he pleaseth, and none ask, What dost thou? Yet the Lord useth

uſeth not to walk according to his own abſoluteneſs, he hath another ordinary rule whereby he worketh, a rule of juſtice and equity; eſpecially in the puniſhing of men; he uſeth not to afflict men for his pleaſure, as tyrants uſe to deſtroy their people. The Lord exerceth his ſoveraignty another way, and if he be abſolute and illimited in any thing, it is in ſhewing mercy on men: But in judgement there may be ſtill ſome reaſon gotten for it in the creature beſide the will of God; So that (ro ſpeak with reverence of his Majeſty) ſtroaks are often drawn out of his hands, he getteth ſo much provocation ere he ſtrike, and holdeth off ſo long threatneth, and giveth warning thus before ſtroaks, as if it were againſt his will to lay on, as if his heart were broken with us.

Secondly, if men knew themſelves and their own ſinfulneſs, they would not challenge God with unrighteouſneſs, but put their mouth in the duſt and keep ſilence. And it is from this ground, that this people do not charge God. Sin is of ſuch infinit deſert and merit, becauſe againſt infinite Majeſty, that God cannot go beyond it in puniſhment: And therefore *Jeremiah* when he is wading out of the deep waters of ſore temptation and ſad diſcouragement, he pitcheth and caſteth Anchor at this ſolid ground, *It is of the Lords mercy that we are not conſumed* Lam. 3. 22. What do I mean, thus to charge God, as if he dealt rigorouſly? No, no, It is his mercy that a remnant is left, our ſtroaks are not pure juſtice, our cup is mixed, mercy is the greateſt part: what ever is behind utter deſtruction, whatever

is below the desert of sin, which is hell and damnation, all this must be reckoned up to mercy: That I am yet alive, and so may have hope, this is mercy, *For why should a living man complain, vers.* 39. That a rod is come to awake us out of security, this is mercy, for we might have slept to death: And this wholsome counsel got *Job* of his friends to stay his murmuring and grudging at Gods dispensations, *Job* 11. 6. Why dost thou complain *Job*? Know but thy sins, and there shall be no room for complaint; look but unto Gods secrets of wisdom, and his Law, and see it is double to what you have known, your obligation is infinit more then you thought upon, and then how great and numberless must iniquities be? Know therefore, saith *Zophar*, God exacteth of thee less then thine iniquities deserve, God exacteth not according to Law, he craveth not according to the obligation, but bids write down fifty in his bill of affliction, when an hundred are written in our bill of deserving. So then complain not, it is mercy that life is saved. Are you men, and living men? wonder at this, and wonder not that you are not wealthy, are not honourable, seing you are sinners: All that came on *Jerusalem* maketh not *Ezra* think God out of bounds, *Chap.* 9. 13. As we are less then the least of Gods mercies, and all our goodness deserveth none of them, so is the least sin greater then the greatest of all his judgements, and deserveth still more: Nay, if there were no more but original corruption common to men, and the filthiness that accompanieth mens good actions, y

is God righteous in punishing severely, and this people acknowledge it so. You use to enquire what sin hath such a man done, when so terrible judgements come on? Nay, enquire no more, he is a sinner, and it is mercy, there is not more, and it is strange mercy that it is not so with you also. You use to speak foolishly when Gods hand is upon you, I hope I have my punishment here, I hope to suffer here for my sins: Poor souls, if God make you suffer for sins, it will be another matter, though now your punishment be above your strength and patience, yet it is below your sin: As sin hath all evil in it, so must hell have all punishment in it: The torment of a Gravel, racking with the Stone, and such like, are but play to Hell, these are but drops of that Ocean, that you must drink out, and you shall go out of one Hell into a worse; eternity is the measure of its continuance, and the degrees of it self are answerable to its duration. There is much impatience even among Gods children under the rod: you vex and torment your selves, and doth well to be angry. Any piece of thwarting dispensation, that goeth cross to your humor and inclination, embitters your spirit against God, and maketh you go cross to his providence: How often do your hearts say, Why am I thus? What aileth the Lord at me? But Christians, learn to study your own deservings, and stop your mouth with that, that you may not speak against Heaven. If you knew sin well, you would not wonder at judgements, you would rather wonder that you are out of hell: know

what right God hath over you, and how little use he maketh of it against you: when you repine at a little, shall it not be righteousness with God to exact more, and let you know your deserving better. He that thinketh it rigor in God to exact fifty, it is justice that God crave an hundred. If the Law require fourty stripes, and he give but one, will you not rather commend and proclaim his clemency, then speak of his cruelty? Wonder that God hath spared us so long. Sin is come to great maturity, as pride is said to blossome and bud into a rod, so all sins are blossomed and budded into the very harvest, that the sickle may be put in. If we should have Cities desolate, and our Land consumed, if we should take up *Jeremiahs* lamentation, and our case be made paralel to theirs, we have then been punished less then our iniquities deserved.

There are some godless people so blackmouthed, as to speak against Heaven when God correcteth them, they follow the counsel of *Jobs* wife, *Curse God and die*, if God but touch them a little in that which is deareſt unto them, they *kick against the pricks*, and run hard-heads with God. As we have known some foolish women when their only child hath been removed, blaspeeme, saying, What can God do more to me, let him do what he can? O madness and wickedness of men! Cannot God do more, when he casteth them in hell? Thou shalt acknowledge that it is more. Some have left off to seek God and turned profane because of the Lords correction. But you would know

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that all that is here is but Arles. If God had done his worſt, you might think your ſelves out of his common, nay, but he hath yet more to do, the full ſumm is to be payed. It were therefore wiſdome yet to make ſupplication to thy Judge.

But thirdly, Sins and iniquities have a great influence in the decay of Nations and Perſons, and change of their outward condition, when it is joyned with the wind of Gods diſpleaſure. The calamity of this people is ſet down in excellent terms, alluding to a tree in the fall of the leaf: We (ſaith he,) were once in our Land as a green tree busked round about with leaves and fruit: our Church and State was in a flouriſhing condition, at leaſt, nothing was wanting to make outward ſplendor and glory, we were immoveable in our own Land, as *David* ſaid in his proſperity, *I ſhall never be moved*, ſo did we dream of eternity in earthly *Canaan*; But now Lord, we are like a tree in the fall of the leaf: ſin hath obſtructed the influence of Heaven, hath drawn away the ſap of thy preſence from among us, ſo that we did fade as a leaf before its fall: we were prepared ſo by our ſins for judgement, viſible draughts and prognoſticks of it were to be read upon the condition and frame of all ſpirits and people: And then did our iniquities raiſe the ſtorm of thy indignation, and that like a whirle-wind hath blown the withering leaves off the tree, hath driven us out of our own Land, and ſcattered us among ſtrangers. Sin and uncleanneſs and the filthineſs of our righteouſneſs prepared us for the

storm, made us light matter that could resist no judgement, made us matter combustible; And then iniquities, and sin rising up to iniquities coming to such a degree, hath accomplished the judgement, put fire among us, made us as the Birk in Yule-even.

First, It is familiar in the Scripture, that people in a prosperous condition are compared unto *a green tree flourishing*, Psal. 37. 35. The wickeds prospering is like a green Bay tree spreading himself in power, spreading out his arms, as it were, over moe Lands to conquer them, over moe people to subject them. And this is often the temptation of the godly, and so doth the Lord himself witness of this people, Jer. 11. 16. *I have called thy name a green Olive tree, fair and of goodly fruit.* This was once their name, though it be now changed. Now they are called a fading withering tree without both leaves and fruit. Now their place doth not so much as know them, they are removed as in a moment, Psal. 37. 36. And this comparison giveth us to understand something of the nature of humane glory and pomp. The fairest and most beautiful excellency in the world, the prosperity of nations and people is but like the glory of a tree in the spring or summer: yea, the Scripture useth to undervalue it more then so, and the voice commandeth to cry, Isa. 40. 6, 7, 8. *All flesh is grass, and the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field, the one withereth, and the other fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it.* A tree hath some stability in it, but the flower of the field is but of a moneth or a weeks standing;

ſtanding; Nay, of one days ſtanding, for in the morning the graſs is green, and the Sun ſcorcheth it ere night, ſo that one Sun's courſe ſhall ſee it both growing green and fadeing: So is the goodlineſs, the very perfection, the quinteſſence (ſo to ſpeak) and the abſtract of creatures perfections: Outward accommodation in a world is as fading a thing as the flower is, as ſmoak is, it is ſo vaniſhing that it bides but a puft of his breath to blow it to nothing. *Job* hath a ſtrange expreſſion, *Thou looketh upon me, and I am not*, Job 7. 8. The Lord needeth no more but ſtare on the moſt durable creature, and look it not only out of countenance, but alſo look it into its firſt nothing, look it out of glory, out of beeing. And therefore you would not truſt in theſe uncertain things, that can take wings and leave you. When you have accommodation outwardly to your mind, do not build your neſt in it: theſe leaves of proſperity will not cover you alwayes, there is a time when they will fall. Nations have their winter and their ſummer, perſons have them likewiſe, as theſe muſt change in nature, ſo muſt they do in their lot. Heaven only is one day, one Spring perpetually bloſſoming and bringing forth fruit: There is the Tree of Life that bringeth forth fruit every moneth, that hath both Spring and Harveſt all the year over. Chriſtians, ſit not down under the green tree of worldly proſperity: If you do, the leaves will come down about you; The Gourd you truſt in, may be eaten up in a night: your Winter will come on, ſo as you ſhall forget the former days, as if they had ne-

ver been. We desire you to be armed for changes: Are not matters in the Kingdome still going about? All things are subject to revolution and change, and every year hath its own Summer and Winter, so hath it pleased the Lord *to set the one over against the other, that man might find nothing after him*, Eccles. 7. 14. Therefore we would have you cast your accompts so, as the former dayes of darkness may return, and the Land be covered with mourning cloaths.

But would you know what is the original of the creatures vanity, what is the moth that eats up the glory and goodliness of creatures enjoyments? Here it is, *Sin and iniquities*. It was sin that first subjected the Creation to vanity, *Rom.* 8. 19, 20. This inferior world was to have been a durable house for an immortal soul, but sin made man mortal, and the world corruptible: And from this proceed all the tempests and disorders that seem to be in the Creation. It is this still: It is sin that raiseth the storm of the Lords wrath, which bloweth away the withered leaves of mens enjoyments. Sin drieth up all the sap and sweetness of the creature-comforts, it maketh the leaves of the tree wither, drives the sap away to the root, hindereth the influence of Gods blessing to come thorow the veins of worldly prosperity: For what is the vertue and sap of Creatures? It is even Gods blessing, and therefore the bread nourisheth not, but the Word and Command of God, *Matth.* 3. 4. That is a right unto the Creatures by Jesus Christ, when possession of them is entered into by prayer and thanksgiving, for all rights sanctified

ſanctified by theſe, and *it is the iniquities of men, that ſeparateth between God and them*, *Iſa.* 59. 2. And when God is ſeparated and divided from enjoyments, they muſt needs be empty ſhells and husks, no kernel in them, for *God filleth all in all, is all in all*; And remove him, and you have nothing; your meat and drink is no bleſſing, your table is a ſnare, your pleaſures and laughter have ſadneſs in them, at leaſt they are like the vaniſhing blaze of thorns under a pot. And therefore *when God is angry for ſin, mens beauty conſumeth as before the moth*, Pſal. 39. 11. When God beginneth to ſhew himſelf terrible, becauſe of ſin, poor man, though of late ſpreading his boughs out, yet all falleth, and like Ice melteth as before the Sun, which juſt now ſeemed as ſolid as ſtone. O but *David* was ſenſible of this, and could ſpeak from much experience, Pſal. 32. 3, 4. *The anger of the Lord did eat him up, and dryed his moiſture*; It might be read in his countenance, all the world could not content him, all the ſhowres of creatures dropping fatneſs could not keep ſap in him, Gods diſpleaſure ſcorcheth ſo, nay, is within him, that no hiding place is to be found in the world, no ſhadow of a rock among all the Creatures in ſuch a weary Land. *Moſes* and the people knew this well, *Pſal.* 90. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. The Lords diſpleaſure carried them away, as a floud coming down carrieth all headlong with it, it ſcorched them, and made them wither as graſs. When God ſetteth iniquitie before him, that which is the ſouls ſecret, beginneth to imprint it in viſible characters on the rod, and writeth his ſin

on his punishment, then no wonder that dayes be spent in vanity and grief, since they are past over in his wrath, *Job* 13. 25. Then doth a soul loath its dainty meat, and then doth the Ox lowe over his fodder, meat is laid before, and he cannot touch it, because of the terrours of the Almighty; And that which before he would not once touch, would not enter in terms of communing with, as the Lords threatnings, he must now sit down, and eat them up as his meat, how sorrowful soever, *Job* 6.5,6,7.

But Secondly, when sin hath prepared a man for judgement, then if iniquity be added to sin, this raiseth the storm, and kindleth the fire to consume the combustible matter: when sin hath given many blowes by preparatory corrections at the root of a mans pleasure and credit, it will at length bring on a fatal stroak that shall drive the tree to the ground. There are some preparatory judgements and some consummatory; some withers the leaf, and some bloweth it quite off. some make men like the Harvest, ripe to put the sickle of judgement into it. The Corruption of a land, the universality of it, and formality in worshiping of God, ripeneth a land for the harvest of judgement, exposeth it to any storm, leaveth it open to the Lords wrath, so that there is nothing to hold his hand and keep off the stroak. But when the wind ariseth, and iniquities have made it tempestuous, then who may stand, it will sweep away Nations and people as a flood and make their place not to know them, so that there shall be neither leaf nor branch left. There is often a great

great calm with great provocations, and iniquities cry, *Peace, peace.* But when once the cry of it is gone up to heaven, and hath engaged Gods anger against a people or person, then it raiſeth a whirl-wind that taketh all away. Now all this belongeth to you, we told you the acknowledgement of ſin was yours already, and a wonder it is that the complaint is not ours alſo: Alwayes this ought to be an admonition and example to us on whom the ends of the world are fallen. Therefore we would declare this unto you, that ſin and iniquities have judgment in the taile. Now you ſit at peace, every one in his own dwelling, and ſpread forth your branches. But is there not much uncleanneſs among you? We would have you trouble your carnal peace and ſecurity, trouble your eaſe with thoughts of this. And we have ground to give this warning, becauſe if there were no more but the iniquity of our holy things, the formality of our ſervice, the commonneſs of Spirit in worſhip, this might be enough to raiſe the ſtorm. You know not for what reaſons to be afraid of judgement, look but on original corruption, look on the defilement of your religious actions, and then find ground ſufficient of fading away. Though now you ſit ſtill and ſeem to be ſo ſetled, as you would never be moved: you dream of an eternity here, you cleave in your hearts to your houſes and lands: you ſtick as faſt to the world, and will not part with it, as a leaf to a tree: yet behold, the wind of the Lord may ariſe, that ſhall drive you away, take your ſoul from theſe things and then

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whose shall they be? If you will not fear temporal judgements, yet I pray you fear eternal, fear hell. May not the Lord shake you off this tree of time, and take you out of the land of the living, to receive your portion. There is not only an universal deadness of spirit on the land, but a prophane spirit, Iniquities, abominable sins abound. Every Congregation is overgrown with scandals; and for you, None may more justly complain: we are all unclean, sin is not in corners, but men declare their sin as *Sodom*, sin is come to the Maturity, Defection and Apostacy is the temper of all Spirits, and above all the general contempt and slighting of this glorious gospel, is the iniquity of *Scotland*, so that we wonder that the withered leaves yet stick to, that the storm is not yet raised, and we blown away. Now you are like stones, your hearts as Adamants and cannot be moved with his threatnings, the voice of the Lords word doth not once move you: you sin and are not afraid; Nay, but when Gods anger shall joyn with iniquity; and the voice of his rod and displeasure roar, this shall make the mountains to tremble, the rocks to move, and how much more shall it drive away a leaf. You seem now mountains, but when God shall plead, you shall be like the chaff driven too and fro. O how easy a matter shall it be to God to blow a man out of his dwelling place: sin hath prepared you for it, he needeth no more but blow by his Spirit, or look upon you, and you will not be. You who now are lofty and proud, and maintain your self against the word, when you

come:

come to reckon with God, and he entereth in judgement, you ſhall not ſtand: *you will conſume as before the moth*: your hearts will fail you, *Who may abide the day of his coming?* It will be ſo terrible, and ſo much the more terrible, that you never dreamed of it. If the example of this people will not move you, do but caſt your eyes on *Ireland*, who all do fade as a leaf, and their iniquities have taken them away out of their own Land. Shall not the ſeeing of the eye, nor the hearing of the ear teach you? What ſecurity do you promiſe to your ſelves? Have not we ſinned as much as they? Were not they his people as we? Certainly ſince God waiteth longer on you, the ſtroak muſt be the greater: provoked patience muſt turn fury. If you would then prevent this peoples complaint, go about ſuch a ſerious acknowledgement of your ſins, *ſearch your wayes and turn again to the Lord.* And let not every man ſit down in a general notion of ſin, but unbowel it until you ſee uncleanneſs, go up to the fountain head, Original corruption, go down to all the ſtreams, even the iniquity of holy things: let every man be particular in the ſearch of his own provocations perſonal, and every one be publick in the general ſins of the Land, that you may confeſſe out of knowledge and ſenſe, *We are all unclean*, &c.

SER-

SERMON XVIII.

Isai. 64. 7. *And there is none that calleth upon thy Name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee,* &c.

THey go on in the Confession of their sins: Many a man hath soon done with that: A general notion of sin, is the higheſt advancement in repentance that many attain to. You may see here, Sin and Judgement mixed in thorow other in their complaint: They do not so fix their eyes upon their desolat estate of captivity, as to forget their provocations. Many a man would spend more affection, and be more pathetick in the expression of his misery when it is pungent, nor he can do when he speaketh of his sins. We would observe from the nature of this confession something to be a patern of your repentance. And it is this. When the spirit convinceth, and men are serious in repentance, then the soul is more searching, more universal, more particular in acknowledgement of sins. These are characters of the Spirits work. First, The Spirit discovereth unto men. not only sin but the loathsomeness of sin, its hainous nature, how offensive it is to Gods holy eye; Many of you know abundance of evil deeds, and call them

sins,

ſins, but you have never taken up ſins ugly face, never ſeen it in the glaſſe of the holy Law, uncleanneſſe it ſelf, becauſe you do not abhore your ſelves; poor and low thoughts of God maketh mean and ſhallow thoughts of ſin. You would be as Job *vile* ch. 40. 4. And *abhore your ſelves in duſt and aſhes*, ch. 42. 6. As Gods holineſs grew great in your eyes, Sins uncleanneſs would grow proportionably Iſ. 6. 3. 5. And here your repentance halteth in the very entry.

But Secondly, The Spirit diſcovereth not only the uncleanneſs of mens natures, and leadeth them up to original corruption, but the Spirit alſo leadeth men alongs all the ſtreams, not only theſe that break out, but thoſe who go under ground, and have a more ſecret and ſubtil conveyance: It concludeth not only open breaches of the command under filthineſs, but alſo all a mans own righteouſneſs, though never ſo refined, it concludeth it alſo a defiled garment, ſo that the Soul can look no where but ſee ſin, and uncleanneſs in its ornaments and duties. And thus it appeareth before God without ſuch a covering, openeth up its Soul, hideth not ſin with the covering of duties, but ſeeth a neceſſity of another covering for all. Now therefore let the moſt part of you conclude that you have never yet gotten your eyes open to ſee ſin or confeſſe it, becauſe when you ſit down to compt your ſins, there are many things that you call not ſin, you uſe not to reckon your praying and repentance among ſins: Nay, becauſe you have ſo much confidence in your repentance and confeſſion, you have never repented; you muſt ſee a ne-

ceſſity

ceſſity of a covering of Chriſts righteouſneſs above all; Faith in Jeſus muſt cover repentance and it ſelf both, with the glorious object of it. But alas how ſoon are many at an end of confeſſion; ſome particular groſſe actions may come in remembrance, but no more. Sum up al your confeſſions, they have never yet pitched on the thouſand part of your guiltineſs, no not in kinds, let be in number.

But thirdly, The Spirit convinceth ſpiritually and particularly both, it convinceth of Spiritual ſins, as we ſaid laſt, of the iniquity of holy things, and eſpecially of the moſt ſubſtantial duties faith and prayer. *John* 16. 8, 9. there are not many of you have come this length to ſee your want of prayer. No, your own words do witneſs againſt you, for you uſe to ſay, I pray day and night, I believe in God with all my heart. Now therefore out of your own mouth ſhall you be condemned, when the ſpirit convinceth you of Sin, you will ſee no faith, no prayer at the firſt opening of the eyes. But I add, there is no true confeſſion but it is particular, the Spirit uſeth not to bewilder mens ſpirits in a general notion only, and a wild field of unknown ſins: And ſuch are many of your convictions: You mourn for ſin (as you ſay) and yet you cannot condeſcend on a particular that burdeneth your conſcience; you grant you have many ſins, but ſit down to compt them, and there is a ſhort compt of them; Now do you not reflect back upon former humiliations in publick, and former acknowledgements of ſins in private? do you not yet return upon your own

own hearts to lay home this ſad challenge. I have never repented, I do not yet repent: muſt not all your ſolemn approaches be iniquity, and abomination, while your ſou s are not afflicted for ſin, while you can ſee ſo few ſins &c. The faſting dayes of *Scotland* will be numbered in the roll of greateſt provocations, becauſe there is no real and ſpiritual conviction of ſin among us: Cuſtom now hath taken away the ſolemnity, and there remaineth nothin g but the very name. Is this the faſt that the Lord chooſeth? No, believe it, this ſhall add to your provocation, and rather haſten lingering judgement, then keep it off, we would beſeech you this day, pray for pardon of former abuſed faſts. If you had no more to mourn for, this might ſpend the day and our ſpirits both, and exhauſt all our preſent ſupplications, even the wall of partition that ſtands between God and Scotland, which all our former ſolemn humiliations hath built up, a great deal higher then other ſins could reach.

There is none that calleth upon thy Name,] Did not this people make many prayers, *Iſai.* 1. 15. before the captivity? And did they not cry, which noteth ſome fervency in it? And faſt a little before it in *Jeremiahs* time, *Chap.* 11. 11. and 14. 12. in the time of it, *Ezek.* 8. 18. *Mic.* 3. 4. *Zech* 7. 3. How then is it that the Prophet now on the watch-tower looking round about him to take up the peoples condition, and being led by the Spirit ſo far as to the caſe of the captives in *Babel,* can find no prayer, no calling? And was not *Daniel* ſo too, *Dan.* 9. 13. Lo, then here is the conſtruction that the Spirit of

of God putteth on many prayers and fastings in a Land, *There is none calleth on thy Name*; there is none that prayeth faithfully and fervently, few to count upon that prayeth any. It may be there are many publick prayers, but who prayeth in secret, and mourneth to God alone? There are many prayers, but the inscription is, *To the unknown God*, to a nameless God, your praying is not a calling on his Name as a known God and revealed in the Word.

This then we would say unto you, that there may be many prayers in your account, and none in Gods. There are many prayers of men that God counteth no more of, then the howling of a dog. First, The cry of mens practices is often louder then their prayers, and goeth up to Heaven, that the cry of prayer cannot be heard. When mens conversation is flat contrary to their supplications, supplication is no calling on his Name, but charming rather. *Sodoms* abominations had a cry up to God, *Gen.* 18. 21. So *Abels* blood had a cry for vengeance, which *Cains* prayers could not out-cry. Thus the Lord would not hear many prayers *Isa.* 1. 15. because hands and practices were polluted: you that know no worship of God, but in such a solemn duty; your religion is summed up and confined within the limits of Temple-worship, Family exercise and prayer; Certainly the rest of your conversation must speak more: God will not hear but such as worship him and do his will *Job.* 4. 31. Your prayer is a dark parable, if your conversation expone it not. This I speak for this end, to put many of you out of your false

falſe ground of Confidence: you have nothing but your prayers to truſt unto, And for your converſation, you never go about it effectually to reform it but goeth on in that which you pray againſt: we declare unto you the truth your prayers are Abomination *Pro.* 28. 9. The wicked may have prayers, And therefore think not to pleaſe God and flatter him with your mouths, when your converſation is rebellion: ſince you hear not him in his commands, God will not hear you in your petitions *Pro.* 1. 24. 28. You ſtopped your ear at his reproof, God will ſtop his ear at your requeſt. If you will go to heaven by your own righteouſneſs, I pray you, follow more after it, make the garment more to cover your nakedneſs: the skirt of a duty is not ſufficient.

Secondly, When iniquity is regarded in the heart, (and idols ſet up in Gods place,) God will not own ſuch a worſhip, but ſendeth a man to the Idols he ſerveth *Pſa.* 66. 18. *Ezek.* 14. 3. 4. Do you not often pray to God againſt a corruption, when your heart cleaveth unto it, and what your mouth ſaith, your heart contradicteth? Light and Conſcience often extort a confeſſion of beloved ſins, while the temper of the heart hath this language, Lord grant not my requeſt. And therefore if there be a prayer for pardon of guilt, yet there is no through reſolution to quite the ſin; And as long as a ſoul is not reſolved to quite the ſin, there can be no ingenuous confeſſion of it, and no prayer for removing the guilt can be heard, You cannot imploy Chriſt in his office of Mediatorſhip

atorſhip as a Prieſt to interceed and offer ſacrifice for ſin, unleſſe you as ſincerely imploy him as a ſanctifier and Redeemer. And therefore prayer that ſeparateth Chriſts offices, and calleth not on whole Chriſt calleth not on his name, for his name is *Lord Jeſus Chriſt* How can the Lord be inquired of by ſuch a one who cometh to mock him, puteth up an Idol in the heart, and yet prayeth againſt it, or ſome other ſin, while he is not reſolved to quite it. Shall God be reſolute to help, when we are not earneſt in ſeeking it. No wonder God anſwer you according to the Idol: No wonder you be given up to ſerve Idols, and your ſin grow upon you as a plague for your hypocriſy, when you ingadge your heart too much to any creature and come to pray and inquire of the Lord in your neceſſity, ſhall it not be righteouſneſs with him, to ſend you to your God *when thou cryeſt let thy companies deliver thee*, Iſa. 57. 13. O man cry unto thy boſome idol, and let it help thee, ſince thou truſteſt to it and ſpendeth thy heart on it, *Deut.* 32. 37, 38. *Where is the God that drunk the Wine of your offerings, and eat the fat of your ſacrifices?* where is the creature that you have made your heart an altar to, to ſend up the flames of your choiceſt thoughts and affections to it? let this riſe up, and help you now, ſaith the Lord. Therefore we exhort you, if you would have your prayers a delight, be upright in the thing you ſeek and ſee that you intertain no known ſin, give it no heart allowance.

Thirdly, There are many prayers not heard, not known, becauſe the mouth outcryeth the heart

heart. It is the ſacrifice of the contrite heart that God deſpiſeth not. The prayers of this people were ſuch, *Iſai.* 29. 13. *They drew near with the mouth, but the heart was far away.* It is worſhip in ſpirit and truth that God loveth, *Joh* 4. 23. Since Prayer is a communion of God with the Creature a meeting of one with God, and ſpeaking face to face; God who is a Spirit and immortal, muſt have a ſpirit to meet with, a ſoul to ſpeak to him. Now do you not find your hearts gading abroad even in duty? Is it not moſt about your Corns and Lands in the time of ſolemn worſhip? Therefore God getteth no more but a carcaſſe to keep communion with; He may have as much fellowſhip with the ſtones of the wall, and timber of the houſe, as he can have with your ears and mouths, while you remove your hearts to attend other things. And I would ſay more, if your mind be preſent, yet your heart is gone, ſometimes, yea often, both are gone abroad: Sometimes the mind and thought ſtayeth, but the affection and heart is not with it, and ſo the minds reſidence is not conſtant: Your thought may come in as a wayfaring man, but tarrieth not all night, dwelleth not. Now ſpeak to it, even Chriſtians, may not your Prayers often have a contrary interpretation to what they pretend? You pray ſo coldrifely and formally, as God will interpret, you have no mind to it: we ask as we ſeemed indifferent whether our petition be granted or not. Should the Lord be affected with your petitions, when you your ſelves are not affected much? Should his bowels of zeal ſound within

in him, when yours are silent? *It is fervent prayer availeth much, Isai. 5. 16.* A heart sent out with the petition, and gone up to Heaven, cannot but bring back an answer. If Prayer carry not the seal of the heart and soul in it, God cannot own it, or send it back with his seal of acceptation.

Fourthly, Many Prayers are not *calling on Gods Name:* And no wonder that when people pray, yet the Spirit say, *None calleth on thy Name*, for Prayer is made, as to an unknown God, and God is not taken up according to his *Name*, which are his glorious Attributes, whereby he manifesteth himself in his Word. To *call on Gods Name*, is so to pray to God, as to take him up, as he hath revealed himself. And what is the Lords Name? Hear himself speak to *Moses, Exod. 33. 19.* and *34. 6, 7. The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.* Now to call on this Name, is for the soul in Prayer, to have a suitable stamp on it: every Attribute of God taking deep impression in the heart. And so Gods Name to be written on the very petitions: And shortly, we may say, the Spirit should have the impression of Gods greatness and Majesty, of his goodness and mercy, of his terribleness and justice. This is the order that God proclaimeth his Name into. In the entry the supplicant should behold the glorious Soveraignty and infinite distance between God and the Creature, that he may have the stamp

ſtamp of reverence and abaſement upon his ſpirit, and may ſpeak out of the duſt, as it becometh the duſt of the ballance and footſtool to do to him, who ſitteth on the circle of the Heaven as his Throne. And this I muſt ſay, there is little Religion and Godlineſſe among us, becauſe every man is ignorant of God. Even Gods children do more ſtudy themſelves, and their condition, then Gods greatneſſe and abſoluteneſſe. Who ſearches Gods infinitneſſe in his Word and Works till he behold a wonder, and be drowned in a myſtery? O but the Saints of old did take up God at a greater diſtance from the Creatures, they waded far into this boundleſſe Ocean of Gods Majeſty, till they were over head and ears, and were forced to cry out, *Who can find out the Almighty to perfection?* All theſe are but parts of him, his back-parts. There is more real Divinity and knowledge of God in one of *Jobs* friends diſcourſes, one of *Davids* prayers, then now in twenty Sermons of gracious men, or many prayers or conferences of Saints. But withal you muſt ſtudy his goodneſſe and mercy, and this maketh up the moſt part of his Name; The definition of God hath moſt of this, ſo that it may be ſaid truly, that mercy is his delight, mercy as it were, ſwelleth over the reſt: God were not acceſſible, unleſſe mercy did temper it. Behold then greatneſſe to humble, and goodneſs to make bold, that you may have acceſſe. As greatneſs ſhould leave the ſtamp of reverence on your petitions, ſo ſhould mercy and goodneſſe imprint them with faith and confidence; And that the rather becauſe

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as Christ is said to be the Fathers Face, and the image of his Person, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. and *Heb.* 1. 3. So may he be called the Fathers Name, and so doth God himself call him, *Exod.* 23.20, 21. *The Angel that went before them in the Wilderness, whose voice they ought to obey, his Name is in him*, and this Angel is *Christ Jesus*, Acts 7. 37, 38. So then Christ Jesus is Gods Name: God as he reveales himself in the Word, is *God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself*, 2 Cor. 5. 19. And therefore Christians, you ought to pray alwayes in Christs Name, and this is to call on his Name. Not only encourage your selves to come to God, because of a Mediator, because he is God in Christ, but also offer up all your prayers in Jesus his Name, that his Name called on them may sanctifie them, otherwise your affectionat prayers cannot be acceptable to God, for he loveth nothing but what cometh thorow the Son; Prayer must have an evil savour, when it is not put in the Golden Censer, that this Angel hath to offer up incense with the prayers of the Saints. And likewise you would know Gods justice and wrath, that you may serve in fear and trembling: And when trembling is joyned with the rejoycing of faith, this is acceptable service. You ought to fear to offend his holiness, while you are before him. Let Gods terribleness have a deep impression on your spirit, both to make sin bitter, and to make mercy more sweet. Thus should Prayer ascend with the seal of Gods Attributes, and then is it a calling on his Name. Now is there any calling on his Name among us? Who maketh it his

ſtudy to take up God in his glorious Names? Therefore you call not on a known God, and cannot name him. Now all of you take this rule to judge your prayers by. Think you not that you make many prayers? You both think it and ſay it, as you uſe to ſay, I pray both day and night. Nay, but count after this rule, and there will be found few prayers in *Scotland*, albeit you reckon up both privat and publick. Once ſcrape out of the compt the prayers of the prophane and ſcandalous, whoſe practice defileth their prayers; And again, blot out the prayers of mens tongues and mouths when hearts are abſent; And again, ſet aſide the formal, dwyning, coldrife, indifferent ſupplications of Saints, and the prayers that carry no ſeal of Gods Name and Attributes on them, prayers made to an unknown God, And will you find many behind? No certainly any of you may take up the complaint in behalf of the Land, *There is none that calleth on thy Name*, or few to count upon. You may ſay ſo of your ſelves if you judge thus, I have almoſt never prayed, God hath never heard my voice; and you may ſay ſo of the Land. This would be a well ſpent day, if this were but our exerciſe, to find out the ſins of our duties in former humiliations: If the Spirit did ſo convince you, as to blot out of the roll of Facts all the former. If you come this length as to be convinced ſolidly that you have never yet prayed and mourned for ſin. I have lived this long, and been babling all this while, I have never once ſpoken to God, but worſhipped I knew not what, fancied a

God like my ſelf, that would be as ſoon pleaſed with me, as I was with my ſelf. If the Lord wrought thus on your hearts, to put you off your own righteouſneſs, you ſhould have more advantage in this then in all your Sabbaths and Faſts hitherto.

Secondly, Although the Lords hand be upon them, and they fade as a leaf, and are driven into another Land, yet *none calleth on his Name*; This maketh the complaint more lamentable, and no doubt is looked upon as a dreadful ſign and token of Gods diſpleaſure, and of ſorer ſtroaks. *Daniel* an eye-witneſſe confirmeth this foretold truth, *Chap.* 9. 13. *All this is come upon us, yet have we not made our prayer to the Lord our God.* Well may the Lord make a ſuppoſition and doubt of it, *Lev.* 26. 40, 41. After ſo many plagues are come on, ſeven added to ſeven, and again ſeven times more, and yet they will not be humbled. And when it is even at the door next to utter deſtruction and conſumption, he addeth, *If then their uncircumciſed hearts be humbled, and they take with the puniſhment of ſin*, &c. We need ask no reaſon of this, for *bray a fool in a morter, his folly will not depart from him*, Prov. 27. 22. Poor fooliſh man is a fooliſh man, folly is born with him, folly is his name, and ſo is he. He hath not ſo much wiſdom as to *hear the voice of the rod, and him that appointeth it.* Poor *Ephraim is an undaunted heifer.* Nature is *a bullock not accuſtomed with the yoke*, and ſo it is chaſtiſed more and more, *Jer.* 31. 18. Man is like an untamed beaſt, as the horſe, or as the mule. Threatnings will not do it, *God ſpeaketh once, yea*

twice, and man perceiveth it not, Job 33. 14. God instructeth by the Word, and men receive no instruction: All the warnings to flee from the wrath to come, are as so many tales to make children afraid. He saith in his heart, *I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my own heart.* Since therefore he will not incline his ear to the Word, God sendeth his rod to seal the Word, and yet men are so wilde that they fight with Gods rods, and will not submit to him: *A yoke must be put on Ephraim, a bridle in mens mouths*, Psal. 32. 9. They will put God to more pains then speaking, and it shall cost them more pain: For he that will not be drawn with the cords of a man, love and intreaties, must be drawn with the cords of a beast, and yoked in a heavy yoke. Yet men are unruly, and the yoke groweth the heavier, and sorer, that they strive to shake it off. An uncircumcised heart cannot be humbled, *How can the Leopard change his spots, no more can my people return to me*, Jer. 13. 23. It is strange that a people so afflicted, will not take with the punishment of their iniquity, but will say in their heart, Wherefore come these things upon me? But here it is, how can an uncircumcised heart be humbled? *God may beat on men with rods as on a dog, but he will run away from him still the more* Isai. 9. 13. Nay, it may be, there will be more stirring after God, and more awaking by the first stroak of affliction, then when they are continued and multiplied: The uncouthness of rods may affect people something, but when his hand lyeth on

but a little; cuſtome breedeth hardneſs, and more and more alienateth ſpirits from him.

Now we need no more to ſeal this truth, but our own experience. I think never people might ſpeak more ſenſibly of it. It hath been the manner of the Lords dealing with us, to uſe fair means to gain us, to threaten before he laid on, to give a proclamation before his ſtroak; And yet it hath been our manner from our youth up to harden our ſelves againſt him, and go on in our own way. Therefore hath the Lord after long patience laid on ſad ſtroaks, and ſmitten us, yet have we not turned to him. It may be when the chaſtiſement was freſh and green, ſome *poured out a prayer, and in trouble viſited God*, Iſai. 26. 18. but the body of the Land hath not known him that ſmote them, and never ran into their hiding place, but the temptation of the time *like a flood hath carried them away with it*. And for the Lords children, how ſoon doth the cuſtome of a rod, eat out the ſenſe of it, and prayer doth not grow proportionably to the Lords rods. The Lord hath expected that *ſome might ſtand in the gap and interceed, yet few or none called on his Name*. General corrections of the Land have made general apoſtacy from God, not a turning in to God; So that we may ſay, we never entered a furnace, but we have come out with more droſs, contracted droſs in the fire. Mens zeal and tenderneſs hath been burnt up, reprobate ſilver may God call us: We have had ſo much experience of the unprofitableneſs of former afflictions, that we know not what the Lord ſhall do with us. We think

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it may be the Lords complaint of *Scotland*, *Why should you be afflicted any more? you will revolt more and more*, Isai. 1. 5. What needeth another rod? You are now all secure, it is true, because you are not stricken; Nay, but what needeth a rod? for it cannot awake you, all the fruit of it would be not to purge away sin, but to increase it: General judgements will prove general tentations, and will alienate you more from me, and make you curse God and the Covenant. And indeed the truth is, we know not, what outward Dispensation can fall on that can affect this generation; We know not what the Lord can have behind, that can work on us: Judgement hath had as much terror, Mercies as much sweetness, and as much of God in the one and the other, as readily hath been since the beginning of the world. Only this we know, all things are possible to him, which are impossible to us; And if the Spirit work to sanctifie the Rod, a more gentle Rod shall work more effectually; his Word shall do as much as his Rod.

The case we are now into, is just this; *None calleth on thee.* It is a terrible one, whither our condition be good or bad outwardly, our peace hath put us asleep, and the Word cannot put men to prayers: Now the Lord hath begun to threaten, as you have been still in fear of new troubles, and a revolution of affairs again, yet I challenge your own Consciences and appeal to them, whom hath the Word prevailed with, to put to prayer? Whom hath the rumour of approaching trouble, put to their prayers?

Whoſe ſpirit hath been affected with Gods frowning on the Land? And this yet more aggravateth your lazineſs; In the time that God doth ſhew terrible things to his people in *Ireland*, *giveth them a cup of wormwood*, *and to drink the wine of aſtoniſhment*: Are not you yet at eaſe, when your brethren and fellow ſaints are ſcattered among you as ſtrangers? yet your hearts bleed not. Well, behold the end of it, your caſe is a ſad prognoſtick of the Lords hideing his Face and conſuming us. Nay, it is a ſure token that his Face is hid already. When *Jobs* friends would aggravate his miſery, they ſumm it up in this, *thou reſtraineſt prayer from God*. It is more wrath to be kept from much praying, nor to be ſcattered from your own houſes. Therefore, if you would have the cloud of Gods anger that covereth the Land with blackneſſe, go over you, and pour out it ſelf on others, if you would prevent the Rod, hearken to the Word and ſtirr up your ſelves to much prayer, that you may be called his remembrancers? O, how long ſhall prayer be baniſhed this Kingdom? The Lords controverſie muſt be great with us, for ſince the days of our firſt love, there hath been great decay of the ſpirit of prayer: The Children of God ſhould be ſo much in it, as they might be one with it. *David* was ſo much in prayer, as he in a manner defined himſelf by it, *Pſal.* 109. 4. *I gave my ſelf unto prayer.* In the original, there is no more, but, *I prayer.* I was all prayer. It was my Work, my Element, my Affection, my Action. Nay, to ſpeak the truth, it is the decay of prayer that

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hath made all this defection in the Land. Would you know the original of many a publick mans Apostacy and backsliding in the cause of God, what maketh them so soon forget their solemn ingagements, and grow particular, seeking their own things, untender in seeking the things of God? Would you trace back the Desertion up to the Fountain head? Then come and see. Look upon such a mans walking with God in private, such a mans praying, and you shall find matters have been first wrong there. Alienation and estrangement from God himself in immediat Duties, and secret approaches, hath made mens Affections cooll to his interest in publick Duties. And believe it, the reason why so few great men, or none are so cordial, constant and through in Gods Matters, is this, they pray not in secret; They come to Parliament or Council, where publick Matters, concerning the Honour of God, are to be debated, as any Statsman of *Venice*, would come to the Senate. They have no dependence on God to be guided in these Matters; They are much in publick Duties, but little in secret with God: Believe it, any mans private walking with God, shall be read upon his publick carriage, whither he be Minister or Ruler.

There is yet another thing we would have you consider, to endear this Duty unto you, and bind upon your Consciences, an absolute necessity of being much in it, and it is this. Prayer and calling on his Name is often put for all immediat Worship of God, especially, the more substantial and moral part of Service. This

people was much in Ceremonials, and they made these their righteousness. Nay, but there was little secret conversing with God, walking humbly with him, loving him, believing in him. Well then, prayer is, as it were, a compend and summ of all Duties. It contains in it, Faith, Love, Repentance, all these should breath out in prayer. In a word, if we say to you, be much in prayer, we have said all, and it is more then all the rest, because it is a more near and immediat approach to God; having more solid Religion in it. If you be lively in this, you are thriving Christians; if you wither here, all must decay, for prayer sappeth and watereth all othes Duties with the influence of Heaven.

That stirreth up himself to take hold on thee] This expresseth more of their condition under the Rod, and while God was threatning to depart and leave them, none took so much notice of it, as to awake out of his dream, to take a fast hold of God. It was but like the grip a man taketh in his slumbering, that he soon quiteth in his sleep. None awaketh himself, as a bird stirreth up it self with its wings to flight: None do so spread out their sails to meet the wind: This importeth a great security and negligence, a careless stupidity. To take hold, to grip strongly and violently, importeth both Faith acted on God, and Communion with God, so that the sense is, no body careth, whither thou go, there is none that stirreth up himself to take violent hold of thee; Men ly louse in their interest, and indifferent in the one thing necessary, do not strongly grip to it. No body keepeth thee by pray-

prayer and interceſſion, ſo that there is no diligence added to diligence, there is no ſtirring up of our ſelves in ſecurity.

Firſt, when the Lord ſeemeth to withdraw, and when he is angry, it is our duty, to take hold the more on him, and not only to act Faith, and call on him by prayer, but to add to ordinary diligence, it ſhould be extraordinary. Firſt then, I ſay, when the Lord is withdrawing and ſeemeth angry, we ought not to withdraw from him by unbelief, but to draw near, and take hold on him. And the Lord giveth a reaſon of this himſelf, *Iſai.* 26. 4, 5. *becauſe fury is not in me.* It is but a moments anger, it is not hatred of your perſons but ſins, it is not fury that hath no diſcretion in it, to difference between a friend and an enemy: It is but at leaſt a fathers anger, that is not for deſtruction, but correction. The Lord is not implacable, come to him and win him, *let him take hold of me, and let him make peace with me, if he will make peace.* He is a God whoſe compaſſions fail not; and ſo he is never ſo angry, but there is room left for manifeſtation of Mercy on thoſe that come to him. Gods anger is not an humor and paſſion as ours is, he can take the poor Child in his Armes, admit it into his boſome, when outward Diſpenſations frown. Mens anger is like the ſons of *Belial*, Briers and Thornes that none may come near to, leſt they be hurt, but God angry is acceſſible, becauſe his anger is ſtill tempered and mixed with Clemency and Mercy, and that mixture of Mercy is ſo great, and ſo predominant in all his Diſpenſations here, that they be-

ing rightly understood, might rather invite to come, then scarre from it, there is more Mercy to welcome, then Anger to drive away.

Secondly, Look upon the very end and purpose of Gods hiding himself, and withdrawing, it is this; that we may come and seek him early, *Hos.* 5. 15 When God is angry, Mercy and Compassion principleth it, for anger is sent out to bring in wanderers: His anger is not humor, but resolute and deliberate, walketh upon good grounds. Because *David* in his prosperity missed not God. When all things went according to his minde, then he let God go where he will. Therefore, the Lord in mercy must hide his own Heart with a frowning countenance, and cover himself with a Cloud, that *David* may be troubled, and so take hold on God, *Psal.* 31. 7, 8. Since then, this is Gods purpose, that you may come nearer to him, and since he goeth away that you may pursue, certainly, he will never so run away as you may not find him out, nor will he run further, nor he strengtheneth thee to pursue him; Thus, *Ps.* 63. 8. God was flying, and *David* pursuing; Nay, but the flyer giveth legs to the pursuer, he upholdeth him, as it were against himself. So did the Angel strengthen *Jacob* to overcome himself. Now shall it not be pleasant to God, that you lay hold on him as your own, even when he seemeth to be cloathed with vengeance, seing he changeth his outward Countenance for this very end, he seemeth to go, that you may hold, because when you think he stayeth, you hold not, as the Child, while the nurse

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is near, will look about it, and take hold of any thing, but when she withdraweth, the Child cleaveth the faster to her.

But Secondly, we ought to stirre up our selves more now, then any other time: Times of Gods withdrawing, calleth for extraordinary and doubled approaches. So *Hab.* 5. 15. *they will seek me early.* And therefore the Lords Children in Scripture, have made great advantage of such Dispensations. The truth is, as long as we are well dealt with, security creepeth on, and Religion is but in a decaying condition: Duties are done through our sleep: We are not as men awaking and knowing what we do, and whither we go. But when the Lord beginneth to trouble us, and hides his Face, then it is a time to awake out of sleep, before all be gone: And there ought to be first, more diligence in Duties and approaching to God; because your case furnisheth more matter of supplication; And as matter of supplication groweth, prayer should grow. If necessity grow, and the cry be not according to necessity, it is ominous. And therefore *David* useth to make his cry go up according to his trouble. In a prosperous Condition, though every thing might call a tender hearted loving Christian to some nearness to God; yet ordinarly, if necessity presse not, prayer languisheth, and groweth formal. Sense of need putteth an edge on supplication, wheras prosperity blunteth it. The heart missing nothing, cannot go above sublunary things; but let it not have its will here, and the need of Heaven will be the great-

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er. Now I ſay, if you ſit ſo many calls, both from a Command, and from your own neceſſities, you do ſo much the more ſin. *Affliction will make even a hypocrite ſeek him, and pour out a prayer and viſit him*, Pſal. 78. And *Iſai.* 26. And if you do not take advantage of all theſe preſſures, you muſt be ſo much the more guilty: And therefore, God as it were, wondereth at their obſtinacy, *They return not to him that ſmiteth them*: All this is come upon us, yet have we not prayed. And ſecondly, it is ſent for that end, that you may be more ſerious, and therefore you ought ſo much the more to awake, to lay hold on him. This is the way the Lord uſeth with his ſecure and wandering Children, *Pſal.* 119. 67. For the Lord findeth us often gripping too ſtrongly to a preſent world; and taking it in our armes, as if we were never to part with it: Mens ſouls cleave to outward accomodations. Therefore the Lord uſeth to part us and our idol, that we may take hold of him the faſter. It is Union with himſelf, that is our felicity, and it is that which God moſt endeavoureth. When he removeth beloved Jewels, it is becauſe they were a ſtumbling block, and divorced the Soul from God: When he ſeemeth to withdraw himſelf, his going proclaimeth ſo much, Oh follow or periſh.

Thirdly, it is a very dangerous thing, when he withdraweth and you follow not, when he is angry, and you care not, doth not fly in to make peace with him, certainly his anger muſt wax hotter, and deſertion will become a ſpiritual plague. Rods muſt be tempered with much bit-

bitterneſs. What mixture of Mercy can be in ſuch a Diſpenſation, where the fruit of it is to harden. But if the Lords hardeſt dealing wrought you to more nearneſs and Communion with himſelf, then certainly you have a fair advantage againſt the preſent trouble, and you have your Cup mixed. You ſhall at length bleſſe God for ſuch Diſpenſations, they may be reckoned for good to you. Next, there ought to be more exerciſe of Faith, and laying hold on the grounds of Conſolation in God, in ſuch a time. 1. For as difficulties grow, Faith ſhould fortify it ſelf againſt them ſo much the more. The greater the ſtorm be, it ſhould fly the more into the Chalmbers. Faith in the time of a calme day getteth no tryal; Faith bulketh much, becauſe it hath not much to do. But except there be ſome freſh and new ſupplies, it cannot hold out in a temptation: But it is a ſingular proof of a Noble and Divine Faith, that can lay hold on him, and keep him, when he would go, that can challenge kindneſs on a miskening Jeſus, that can ſtand on the ground of the Promiſes, when there is not a foot breadth of a Diſpenſation to build on: While all things go with you, ye have no difficulty to maintain your Faith; Nay, but when the Lord ſeemeth to look angry, then awake and gather ſtrength, take hold on his ſtrength; Look what is in your Condition, or his Diſpenſation, what is good or omnious, then take hold on the other hand on him, and look what is in him to anſwer it, and ſwallow it up: Ye ought to be well acquaint with the grounds of Conſolation

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that are in God, in the worſt caſe, and then ye might lay hold on him, though he ſeemed a conſuming fire. It is then a time that calleth moſt for ſecureing your intereſt in him, a time when there is no external advantage to beguile you, a time when the only happineſs is to be one with God. Therefore, the man who in ſuch Calamities and Judgements, is not awaked to put his eternal Eſtate out of queſtion, he is in a dangerous caſe: For do not moſt part drive over their dayes, and have no aſſurance of Salvation, they dare not ſay, either pro, or contra. It may be, and it may not be. And this is the length that the moſt part come, a negative Peace; No poſitive Confidence. No clear concluding on ſure grounds an Intereſt. Alwayes ye are moſt called to this, when God afflicteth the Land, or you: If ye do not then make Peace, it is moſt dangerous. 3. The Lord loveth Faith in a difficulty beſt, it is the ſingleſt and the cleanlieſt, it is that which moſt honoureth him, and glorifieth his Truth and Faithfulneſſe, and Sufficiency and Mercy; for then it is moſt purely Elevated above Creatures, and pitcheth moſt on God; And therefore bringeth men to this, *No help for my ſoul, but thou art my portion.* And this commendeth God moſt; when he is ſet alone. Proſperity bringeth him down among Creatures, and ſecure Faith, maketh little diſtinction; But awakening Faith grippeth ſtrongly and ſingly, puteth God alone:

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Secondly, Oftentimes, when God is departing, none ſtirreth up himſelf to lay hold on him. Although there may be praying and doing of many duties, yet there is nothing beyond ordinary. The varieties and acceſſions of new grounds of ſupplications doth neither make greater frequency, nor more fervency. This our experience may clear unto us both in duties and faith. Firſt, There is very little diligence in ſeeking of God in the way and means appointed, even when God ſeemeth to bid farewel to the Land and go away: No body cometh in as an interceſſor. Men keep on their old way of praying, and never addeth to it, come what like. Who is it that riſeth above his ordinary as the Tide of Gods diſpenſation is? There ought to be ſuch an impreſſion made by the changes of Gods countenance, as might be read on the duties of his people. There ſhould be ſuch a diſtance between your ordinary and ſuch times, as between a ſleeping man and a waking man, that whatever your attainment of acceſs to God be, ye might ſtir up and go beyond it, according as matters call. Will God count your publick Faſts a performance of this duty? Alas, we faſt ſleeping, and none ſtirreth up himſelf to theſe things. Is there any difference betwixt your ſolemn Humiliation and another Sabbath? And is there any difference between a Sabbath and a week day, ſave the external duty? Is not this palpably our caſe? Is there any wakening among us? No, ſecurity is both the univerſal diſeaſe and complaint; And it is become an incurable diſeaſe, ſince it became a com-

complaint. Doth any of you pray more in private then ye uſed? Or what edge is on your prayers? Alas, the Lord will get good leave to go from us; It feareth me, that we would give Chriſt a Teſtimonial to go over Seas. *Hold him, hold him.* Nay, the multitude would be gladly quite of him, they cannot abide his yoke, his work is a burden, his word is a torment, his diſcipline is bands and cords; And what heart can ye then have to keep Chriſt? What violence can ye offer to him to hold him ſtill? All your intreaties may be fair complements, but they would never rent his garment. Secondly, There is no up-ſtirring to faith among us, and laying hold on Jeſus Chriſt, albeit all his diſpenſations warn us that it is now high time. There are not many who are about this point effectually, to ſtir up their faith, or to ſecure their intereſt. Think ye that conjectures will carry you thorow difficulties. The multitude think they believe much, but any temptation proveth their miſtake. The moſt part of *Scotland* would deny God and his Son Jeſus Chriſt, if they were put to it. Alwayes it is a time ye would not ly out from your ſtrong hold. faith only uniteth you to Chriſt, and if ye would be kept in any trial ſtir up faith.

Thirdly, Prayer and Faith, diligence and laying hold on God muſt go together, and help one another. Not calling on his Name, and not laying hold on him go together, and have influence one upon another. Firſt, Faith hath influence on Prayer. Laying hold on God in Chriſt, will make right calling on his Name,

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it learneth men how to call God, to call him *Abba, Father.* Faith useth to vent it self in Prayer; I say, much consideration of God, and claiming in to him, and to the grounds of confidence in him, must both make Prayer acceptable, and carry the stamp and impression of Gods Name, or Christ Name on it, and also make much prayer: for when a soul hath pitched on God, as its only felicity, and thus made choice of him, it findeth in him all-sufficiency, all things for all things; There is no necessity, but it findeth a supply in his fulness for it; And therefore it applyeth a man to the fountain, *to draw out of the wells of salvation.* There is nothing can be so sweet and refreshing, as for such a soul to pour out it self every day in him, to talk with him face to face. Faith ingageth the heart to come to God with all things; whereas many difficulties would have been, and the secure or unsettled heart would have gone as many different wayes to help them: Faith laying hold on God, knoweth but one, and bringeth all here. And therefore access to God is a fruit of it, *access unto the grace wherein we stand by faith,* And again, how can Prayer be acceptable, as long as Faith doth not principle it; It is but like a beasts groaning under a burden. Laying hold on God himself makes a mans duties acceptable, because he speaks and asks, believing that he shall receive, he trusteth God, and doth not tempt him. Where lively faith is not intertained, there cannot be much affection, which is the oyl of the wheels. There may be in some bitterness of spirit much vehemency, but that is

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not a pure flame of divine love that burneth upward to him, and it is soon extinguished, and lasteth no longer nor present sense, and then the soul groweth harder, as iron that had been in the fire. Secondly, when there is not much prayer and calling, faith cannot be strong and violent; for prayer is even the exercise of faith, if you wear out of that, faith rusteth. There may be much quietness with little prayer, but there cannot be much and strong and lively faith; for where it getteth not continual imployment it faggs. And indeed prayer is a special point of holding God fast, and keeping him. Therefore joyn these, if ye would thrive in any one of them. Your unbelieving complaints are not prayers and calling on his Name, because they are not mixed with faith. As the Apostle said of the Word, so may it be said of Prayer, your prayers are not profitable, are not heard; because not mixed with faith. Ye use to doubt, that ye may be fervent, to question your interest, that ye may stir up your spirits to prayer: But alas, what a simple grosse mistake is that? Poor soul, though thou get more liberty, shall it be counted access to God? Though you have more grief, and your bitterness doth indite more eloquence, shall God be moved with it? Know ye not that you should ask without wavering, and lift up pure hands without wrath and doubting? and yet both are there.

Fourthly, The duty we are called to in such a time when God is angry, is to lay hold on him. We would speak a word more of it: And first, we ought to hold a departing Lord, by wrest-

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ling with him in ſupplication, *not to let him depart till he bleſs*, *Hoſ.* 12. 3, 4. The application of *Jacobs* victory over the Angel is thus, *Turn ye to the Lord, and wait on him*, &c. How had *Jacob* power over the Angel? By ſupplication and weeping. So that prayer is a victory over God, even the Lord God of Hoſts. We ought (as it were) to ſtrive againſt outward diſpenſation; when it ſaith, He is gone, when our condition ſaith, He is gone, or going, we ought to wreſtle with it: No ſubmiſſion to ſuch a departing, I mean, no ſubmiſſion that ſitteth down with it, and is not careful how it be. Now this time calleth you to ſuch an exerciſe. The Lord ſeemeth to be angry with us, there is a ſtrong cloud over the Land, and like to pour down upon us, the Lord is drawing a ſword again, and beginning now to lay on: Many threatnings would not put us to ſupplication; Now what will the laying on of the rod do? If the former dayes be returning wherein ye ſaw much ſorrow, Is it not then high time for the Lords remembrancers, and for the Lords children to wreſtle with God. As *Eſau* was coming on *Jacob*, ſo hath God armed men, and ſuch deſperate men, as he hath made a rod to us before. If we be twice beaten with it, it is very juſt, for before we did not ſeek in to him who ſmote us. You would know this, that the Lord is but ſeeking imployment, and if ye would deal with him, ye may make advantage of the preſent and future calamities. And look to this laying hold on him: This is the chief thing ye ſhould now heed. It is God himſelf that ſhould

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be your principal object. Praying ſhould be a laying hold on God, it ſhould meet with himſelf. For the moſt part in the time of proſperity, we cannot meet with God ſinglely, we have ſo much to do with creatures, we keep tryſts ſo punctually with them, ſo that we cannot keep with God: : We have ſo many things in our affections and thoughts, that God cannot get place, he cannot get us at leiſure for the throng of our buſineſs: we loſs God by catching at ſhadows. Well then, we are called in ſuch a time of difficulty to come in to God himſelf, to draw by the vail of Ordinances, that we may have Communion with God himſelf. And this is right praying when the ſoul getteth ſuch immediate acceſs to God, as it were, to handle him, and ſee him, and taſte him, to exerciſe its ſenſes on him. Ordinances have been of a long time a covering of his face, and he uſeth not now to unvail himſelf in the Sanctuary, and let us ſee his glory: God is departed from preaching and praying, and the ſolemn meeting, ſo that we meet not with God, we lay hold on a ſhadow of an outward Ordinance, but not on God himſelf. Therefore Chriſtians make advantage of this time, you may be brought to want Ordinances, then lay hold on himſelf, who is the ſubſtance and marrow of them: you may be denuded of outward comforts and accommodation here, then lay hold on himſelf in much prayer. If affliction would blow away the cloud on his face, or would ſcatter our idols from us, and make us ſingle alone with God, as *Jacob* was, it were well ſent.

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Secondly, Your exercise should be to take hold on God by faith: And first ye would make peace with God, be much in direct acts of apprehending God himself in Jesus Christ. And this is according as ye take up your selves in your own misery and necessity. Do but travel continually between your own misery and something answerable in God.

The first thing we would have you do now when God frowns upon us, find out your own lost condition, and how great strangers you have been to him, even when ye have approached in many Ordinances; And find a necessity of making peace with God and atonement. Now from this, lay hold on Christ as *the hope set before you*, look upon that in him which will answer all your necessities, and be suitable to them. It is not matters of outward lot that should go nearest your heart: Let the world go where it will, that which concerneth you most in such a time, is the securing your soul: for if ye loss it what gain you? What keep you? Your houses and lands and lives may be in hazard: Nay, but one thing is more worth then all these, and in more hazard. Begin at spiritual things, and ask how matters stand betwern God and thee.

Secondly, Not only would ye be much in immediat application unto Jesus Christ, but ye would so take hold of him, as ye may be sure ye have him. Make peace, and know that ye have made it, and then shall ye be kept in perfect peace. You would never rest until you can on solid grounds answer the question. And this duty is called for from you at such a time,

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for *the just shall live by faith*, in a troublesome time, *Hab.* 2. 4. And as ye ought to keep and hold fast confidence, and not cast it away in such a time, so should ye all seek after it: Do not only rest in this, I know no. but I may belong to Christ, I dar not say against it. O no Christians, you should have positive clear grounds of assurance, *I am his, and he is mine, I know that my Redeemer liveth. God is my portion.* And if ye conclude this solidly, I defy all the world to shake and trouble your peace: this is perfect peace, *peace, peace*, double peace. How can you choose but be shaken at every blast of temptation, when you are not thus solidly grounded, when you hold not at your Anchor.

And Thirdly, Having thus laid hold on Christ, as your own, lay hold on all in him as yours, and for your use. Whatever difficulty the present time, or your own condition afford, search but as much in God, as may counterballance it. Answer all objections, from his Mercy, Goodnesse, Power, Wisdom, Unchangableness: And this shall be more nor the trouble: God himself laid hold upon, and made ours, is more nor removing a temporal Calamity. It is an eternal weight, to weigh down all Crosses and Disapointments. For what can present things be? Is there not in the favour of his countenance, that which may drown them in Oblivion? Are ye like to stay here? Is not God a sure Anchor to hold by? And if you do not this, your trouble is nothing in respect of the danger of your Soul. Secondly

and looſe lying out of God, not putting this matter to a full poynt, is worſe nor all your outward fading. Therefore we exhort you in the Lords Name, to fly in to this Name of the Lord, as a ſtrong tower to run to and be ſafe. When the Lord ſeemeth now to be angry with us, run not away from him, though he ſhould yet cloath himſelf with vengeance as a Garment.

But Firſt, O ye poor people who have never asked this Queſtion, whether have I any Intereſt in Jeſus? Ask it now, and reſolve it in time. If trouble come on, if ſcattering and deſolation come on, and our Land fade as a Leaf, certainly the Lords anger will drive you away. What will ye do in the time of his Indignation? All of you put this to the tryal, how matters ſtand between God and you?

And Secondly, if ye find all wrong, do not ſink in diſcouragement; All may be amended, while it is ſeen wrong in time. Nay, God taketh away outward Accomodation, to make you more ſerious in this. And it is the very voice of Rods, every one fly in to your hold, every one make peace with me. You may take hold and do it feckfully.

Thirdly, You who have fled to Jeſus, take more hold of him, you are called alſo to renew your Faith, and begin again: Make peace with God, let your confidence be kept faſt, and thus ſhall ye be immoveable, becauſe he changeth not. God will not go from you if ye believe, hold him by Faith. Chriſt could not do great things in *Galilee*, *becauſe of their unbelief, and ſo he departed from them.* As unbelief maketh

eth an evil heart, to depart from the God of all Life and Conſolation: So doth it make God depart from us. But Faith caſteth a knot upon him (to ſpeak with reverence) it faſteneth him by his own Word and Promiſe, and he cannot go by it. It is a violent hand laid on God. I will not let thee go till thou bleſſe me.

Fourthly, Faith and Prayer, or holding of God, by believing in him, and much imploying him, needeth much ſtirring up unto, and awaking. *That ſtirreth up himſelf to take hold on thee.* Security is the moth of both theſe, and eateth out the life of Faith and Supplication: It maketh Prayer ſo coldrife, that it it cannot prevail, and Faith ſo weake, that it cannot uſe violence. Firſt, ſecurity apprehendeth no evil, no need. A ſecure condition is a dream, that one is eating, and yet his Soul is empty. Look how the people of *Laiſh* were quiet and ſecure, apprehending no evil; Deſtruction cometh then on as an armed man. Always, it is much neceſſity that adminiſters fewel to a mans Faith, and Supplication. *David*, Pſal. 30. 7. *I ſaid in my proſperity, I ſhall not be moved.* Nay, but many ſay in adverſity, and cry peace, peace, where no peace is. Security pleadeth innocency, and then believeth immunity. *I am innocent, therefore ſhall his anger turn away*, Jer. 2. 35. Security applyeth not ſin, and ſo refuſeth the curſe of ſin, and wages of it. And thus is a man in his own eyes, *a lord, and then he will come no more to God*, Jer. 2. 31. It is almoſt impoſſible to awake men by general Judgments,

to

to apprehend perſonal danger, and men never ſtirr out of their neſt, till it be on fire. We can behold, or hear of our neighbours ſpoyling, and violence done to them, but till the voice of a cry be heard in our own Streets and Fields, no body will take the Judgement to themſelves. It is well ſaid, that which is ſpoken to all, is ſpoken to none, ſo what is done to all in generall, is done to none. The voice of a general Rod, ſpeaketh not particularly, and maketh not men apprehenſive of ſad things, and thus men are not preſſed unto prayer, are not put out of themſelves; It is onely neceſſity that ſapps the roots of it, and makes it green. Secondly, Security is lazy and not active, putteth not forth its hand to work, and ſo dieth a beggar, for, *onely the hand of the diligent maketh rich.* Laying hold on God is a duty that requireth much ſpirit in it: Men do not grip things well in their ſlumbering. There is no Duty that needeth ſo ſpiritual and lively Principles. If a man do not put on ſuch a peece of reſolution and edge upon him, he cannot come to the wreſtling of Prayer, and violence of Faith. Although the exerciſe and acting of Grace dependeth more upon the Spirit of God, his preſent Influence, then upon the Soul of man, yet this is the way the Lord communicateth his Influence, by ſtirring up and exciting the Creature to its duty, as if it could do it alone. Grace is one thing, and the ſtirring up of it is another thing: For when we ly by and

ſleep over our time, and go not about the matter ſo ſeriouſly, as it were life and death, it is but a weak hold we can take of God. According to the meaſure of a mans apprehending neceſſity, and according to the meaſure of his ſeriouſneſs in theſe things, ſo will the hand of Faith grip, and lay hold with more or leſſe violence. As a man drowning, will be put from ſleeping, and when one is in extreem hazard, all his ſtrength will unite together in one, to do that which at any ordinary time it could not do, ſo ought it to be here. A Chriſtian aſſaulted with many temptations, ſhould unite his ſtrength, and try the yondmoſt. O but your whole ſpirits would run together, to the ſaving of your ſelf, if ye were very apprehenſive of neceſſity. The exerciſe of Faith is a dead grip, that cannot part with what it grippeth. Therefore firſt, we muſt ſay to you, it is not ſo eaſy a thing as you believe, to lay hold on God, there muſt be ſtirring up to it. And when the Lord ſpeaketh of our ſtirring our ſelves, certainly he meaneth this likewayes, that he muſt ſtirr us, ere we ſtirr our ſelves. Secondly, above all be afraid of a ſecure condition: It is the enemy of Communion with God and ſpiritual Life; therefore look about you, and apprehend more your neceſſity, and then give no reſt and quietneſs to your ſelf, till you have imployed and engaged him; Be as men flying, to lay hold on the refuge ſet before you. Thirdly, It muſt be a time of little acceſſe to God, and

little

little Faith ; when we are all ſecure, and no body goeth about Religion as their work and buſineſs. We allow our ſelf in it. Therefore we do exhort you firſt, to purpoſe this as your end to aim at, and purpoſe by Gods Grace to take more hold of God. There is little minding of Duty, and that maketh little doing of it : Once ingage your hearts to a love and deſire of more of this, come to a point of reſolution. I muſt know him more, and truſt more in him, be more acquant with him. And Secondly, Put your ſelf in the way of Duty. It is God that only can ſtirr you up, or apply your hearts to the uſing of violence to God : But ye would be found in the outward means much, and in theſe ways God will meet with you, if you wait on him in them.

For thou haſt hid thy face from us] Here is the greateſt plague, a ſpiritual plague. The laſt *Verſe* was but the beginning of ſorrows, *We all do fade*, &c. But lo, here the accompliſhment of Miſery, *God hiding his face*, and conſuming them in the hand of their ſins. Firſt, The Lords hiding of his Face, and giving up a people to melt away in their ſins, puniſhing with judicial blindneſs and ſecurity, is the worſt Judgment, it filleth the Cup full. This complaint goeth on ſtill worſe. And certainly, it is worſe, nor their fading as a leaf, and exile out of their Land. It is not without reaſon, that great troubles and afflictions are ſo expreſſed, *thou hid thy face*. As *David* ſaid, *thou hidſt thy face*

and

and I was troubled; importing as much, as it is not trouble that doth trouble, but Gods hideing of his Face that maketh trouble trouble. It is in so far trouble, as it is a sign of his displeasure, and as the frowns of his Countenance are upon it. Therefore, the Saints aggravating their Affliction say, *thou hideth thy face.* You know the face is the place wherinto either kindness, or unkindness appeareth. The Lords Countenance, or Face, is a refreshful sweet manifestation of himself, to a Soul; It is the Lord using familiarity with a spirit, and this made *David* more glad nor Corn and Wine. Now the hideing of the Face, the withdrawing of his Countenance is, when the Lord in his Dispensation and dealing doth withhold the manifestation of himself, either in life or consolation: When he covereth himself with Clouds round about, that neither can a soul see in to the backside of it, into his own warm heart, nor can the Sun-beames shine thorow, to quicken and refresh the soul. The Lord draweth over his Face, a Vail of a crossing dispensation or such like.

There is a desertion of the soul in the point of life and spiritual action, and there is a desertion in regard of consolation. The varieties of the Lords desertions run upon these two. As a Christians life is action or consolation, and the Lords influence is either quickening or comforting, so his withdrawing is either a prejudice to the one or the other. Sometimes *he goeth mourning all the day,*

day, nay, but *he is ſick of love*: Sometime he is a bottle dryed in the ſmoak, and his moiſture dried up. The Chriſtians conſolation may be ſubſtracted, and his life abide, but he cannot have ſpiritual conſolation, if he be not lively. This life is more ſubſtantial, comfort is more refreſhful; life is more ſolid, comfort ſweet, that is true growing ſolid meat, this but ſawce to eat it with.

The hiding here meant is certainly a ſpiritual puniſhment. The Lord denying unto this people grace to underſtand the voice of the rod, he appearing as a party againſt them, leaving them to their own carnal and lazie temper, and thus they lay ſtill under Gods diſpleaſure. Now there is nothing like this, firſt, becauſe it is a ſpiritual puniſhment, and eſtates are not to be valued and laid in the ballance with the ſoul. Albeit men are become ſo brutiſh as to abaſe their ſouls, and proſtitute them to any thing, yet all a man hath, is not conſiderable to it. Secondly, It is a more excellent thing is removed by it, *In his favour is life*: all felicity and happineſs is in Gods countenance. If a man have not this, what hath he elſe? Loſſes are according as the thing is. Nay, but here is more, *My Lord is taken from me, my God hath forgotten me.* And indeed, if mans true happineſs be in communion with God, certainly, any interruption coming in muſt be ſad, and make a man more miſerable then the world knoweth. There is a greater emphaſis in that word. *Thou haſt hid thy face*, then if he had ſaid, All the

world

world hideth their face and maketh a scorn of us.

Therefore first, know, what is the worst thing of the times. Many of you think sword and pestilence, and the burdens of the time, the worst things, and if you were now to complain, the saddest complaint would be, Affliction is laid on our loins. But know this, if your Cities were desolate, if your Land were made a wilderness, and we captives in another Land, there is yet a worse thing then all these, and think you not this strange? Nay, I say, there is something worse already in us, that we know not of, and it is this, *Make the hearts of this people hard*, A spirit of slumber and deadness from the Lord upon the Land: There are multitudes he will never shew his face unto; it is still vailed from them, and they know him not. Ye that think all were well, if ye had peace and prosperity, and know no hiding of Gods countenance, no anger but when he striketh, certainly you know not what his countenance is, by all *these things men neither know love nor hatred*. Secondly, Whatever calamity come upon you outwardly, deprecat most spiritual plagues, and Gods deserting. If you have Gods countenance, it may make you glad in much sadness. You would be most careful lest any partition-wall come in, lest his countenance change on you, if you grieve his spirit and break his heart. Seek to have his face to shine, and this shall be a Sun *with healing under his wings*. O but Christs coun-

countenance is comely, when it is ſeen without clouds; but often it is overclouded with much provocation.

Secondly, The Lords hiding of his face hath influence on the temper of ſpirits, and diſpoſition in duties. The truth is in general, *In him we live, and move, and have our beeing*: And more eſpecially, in many things that is ſpiritual. we are of our ſelves able to do nothing. The creatures holineſs, and eſpecially our life, is but as the rayes that the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſendeth forth round about him, and if any thing come between, it evaniſheth: As the Marigold that openeth its leaves when the Sun riſeth, and cloſeth when it goeth down again, ſo exactly doth our ſpiritual conſtitution follow the motions of his countenance, and depend wholly on them, *Thou hides thy face, and they are troubled*, Pſal. 104. 9. The Lord needeth no more but diſcountenance us, and we are gone.

Alwayes firſt, be more dependent creatures; we uſe to act as from habits within, without any ſubordination to the Lords grace without us, but we find that our ſufficiency is not of our ſelf. How often doth your ſpiritual condition change on you in an hour? You cannot command one thought of God, or act from any habit of grace even then when you can bring forth other gifts in exerciſe. Ye find that grace findeth more difficulties, moe interruptions, therefore learn to attend the changes and motions of his countenance.

Secondly, When you find your heart dead, and

and you concluded under an impossibility of taking hold on God in a lively manner, then I pray you, look unto the Lords suspending of his influence, and let your whole endeavours be at the Throne of Grace to help it: It will not be your own provoking of your self to your duty, but you must put your self upon God, that he may cause his face to shine.

Thirdly, Though the Lords hiding his face be often a cause of our deadness, and his desertion maketh all to wither yet we have often a culpable hand in it: And he hides his face, being provoked so to do. One thing we may mention; Grieving of the Holy Ghost whereby we are sealed, quenching the motions of the Spirit; maketh the Spirit cover his face with a vail, and hide it. There is here ordinarily a reciprocal or mutual influence. Our grieving him, makes him withdraw his countenance, and his withdrawing his countenance, maketh us to wither and grow barren.

Fourthly, The most sure and infallible token of the Lords hiding his face, is security, and a spirit of deadness and laziness; when folk go about duties dreaming, and do all, as it were, thorow their sleep. Therefore we may conclude sad things on this Land, that the Lord hideth his face from us. And therefore arise and do not settle and quiet your selves in such a condition: The Lord is angry, needeth any more be said? No more needeth to kind children: but the rod must follow this to make anger sensible.

FINIS.